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PUBLIC MEETINGS

AND

HOW TO CONDUCT THEM

A HANDY GUIDE

FOR

PROMOTERS, CHAIRMEN, AND SPEAKERS

AT POPULAR ASSEMBLIES.

79394

By SAMUEL NEIL.

AUTHOR OF "THE ART OF PUBLIC SPEAKING," "COMPOSITION AND ELOCUTION," "THE YOUNG DEBATER," ETC., ETC.

"Look well to't. Protect yourselves."—SHAKSPERE

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PREFACE.

On many occasions the author of this work has been asked for information upon points involved in the promoting and conducting of Public Meetings of various sorts, and not unfrequently has complaint been made, that in no readily accessible form, could such a view of the details regarding Public Meetings be found, as would supply an ordinary reader with an intelligible idea of the formalities and course of procedure pursued in those voluntary assemblies of the people so common in our country.

Led thus to consider the subject, the author gathered together the best thoughts he could glean from others, and endeavoured so to combine them with those he had himself formed, after close observation, during a wide experience, as to contribute, at least, to the formation of a Handy Guide to the proper management of Public Meetings.

The author does not pretend to have made an exhaustive survey of the whole field of possible teaching regarding "Public Meetings, and how to conduct them." The difficulty, and the newness of the attempt, will form apologies for those defects and imperfections which may be found in

this small work on a great subject. Such as it is, it embodies the results of considerable inquiry made among those who have had much experience in the matter, careful reading, attentive observation, patient noting of facts, and painstaking thought. All the information he could procure has been sedulously collated, compared, and arranged; tested by close reasoning and watchful experience; and is so set forth by the author as to ensure, he hopes, the safe, harmonious and practical management of public meetings of all kinds.

During many years this compendium has been before the public. Its utility has been widely acknowledged, its value felt, and its recommendations have been found practical. The *lex non scripta*, which hitherto could only be learned by actual experience, may be found herein, written in a plain manner and digested in a reasonable and readable form.

The favourable acceptance of his work, and the position it has attained as a reliable and reasonable exposition of the right, value, importance, and variety of public meetings, and of the procedure best calculated to effect their objects, have greatly gratified the author. He has, in consequence, in the midst of the occupations of a busy life, employed both time and labour in subjecting this book to a thorough review. He has diligently reconsidered and revised the whole matter, and believes that, in its present form, it points out the proper course of procedure to be adopted, in any circumstances, in regard to "Public Meetings and How to Conduct Them."

S. N.

EDINBURGH, 1881.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

I. The Formation and Publication of Opinion 7

II. The Right of Public Meeting:—its Utility, and the Advantages of it . . . 16

III. Opinion, Public Opinion, and the means of Influencing it 18

IV. Public Meetings and their Promoters . 22

V. The Convening of Public Meetings . . 29

VI. The Rights and Duties of the Promoters of Public Meetings 31

VII. The Chairman—his Nomination, Election, Rights, and Duties 33

VIII. The General Business of Public Meetings, and the Method of Conducting it . 40

IX. Speakers at Public Meetings—their Rights and Duties 47

X. The Order and Laws of Business . . 51

XI. The Rights and Duties of the Audience at Public Meetings 54

XII. Marks of Approbation or Disapprobation at, and Disturbance of, Public Meetings 57

PAGE

XIII. THE ELOQUENCE OF PUBLIC MEETINGS . . 64

SECT. I. THE PLATFORM 71

II. THE HUSTINGS . . . 80, 87

III. THE VESTRY, ETC. . . 83, 89

IV. THE LECTURE ROOM . . 85, 90

APPENDIX.

I. WORKING MEN'S CLUBS AND INSTITUTES . 92

II. RULES (SCHEME OF A SOCIETY'S) . . . 93

III. A CLASSIFIED VIEW OF PUBLIC MEETINGS . 94

IV. A SYLLABUS OF THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR PUBLIC MEETINGS 94

V. GENERAL HINTS ON HOW TO CONDUCT SOIRÉES, PENNY READINGS, SOCIAL AND MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENTS, ETC., ETC. 95

INDEX 96

PUBLIC MEETINGS,

AND HOW TO CONDUCT THEM.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE FORMATION AND PUBLICATION OF OPINION.

THE formation of opinion is scarcely more important than the publication of it. Public opinion is the mental force of the nation exercised upon the questions of the day. Its determinations must not only be entertained, but expressed. Freedom of thought may be enjoyed by any and all; but it is an ineffective force unless freedom of speech accompany and follow it, and freedom of action be held as the ultimate aim of its efforts. Thought is doubtlessly the grand central motive-power in morals as in mechanics, in social life as in steam-industries, in national as in material prosperity. Thought is the seed-grain out of which all progress springs. But its productiveness depends upon and results from its being placed under the conditions of growth, and specially under and amidst all the activities of culture. By speech, thought is made living and winged. Thought is, in itself, the result of reasoning; when expressing itself, it is transformed into persuasion, and persuasion is the main influence by which men are stirred to action.

It is scarcely to be wondered at, therefore, that there should be much need for, and use of, eloquence in the course of the consideration of the serious and important matters which engage the attention of bodies of men "in public meeting assembled:" for there the interests, the desires, the hopes, the honour, the deliberations, the

actions, and the pledges of men are subjected to criticism; and round each of these the passions set themselves. Almost all passions are demonstrative and communicative, —all are earnest. Earnestness invariably stirs men. Their very instincts make them hesitate to believe that a man who touches the heart, and affects the principles of others, can be himself heartless and unprincipled. They cannot avoid believing that the intimate persuasion of all-swaying conviction which an earnest man exhibits cannot have been brought about without a sufficient cause. Then, from the prevalence of sympathy in our nature, all men feel disposed to conform their thoughts, wishes, and aims to those with whom they pass their daily lives, and each exerts an assimilative force upon another. When, therefore, the idea is forced upon us that the person addressing us really believes the proposition for which he contends, and is filled with a sense of its transcendent importance, even to such an extent as to have the deep-lying fountains of his inner nature set aflow, so that he must speak out before us, as it were, the very secrets of his soul upon the subject, we feel inclined to adopt his opinions as far more intensely thought out as well as infelt than our own, and therefore, far more likely to be correct. To use such forms of address as, by showing that we ourselves strongly and earnestly believe and feel the force of the arguments we employ, tends to engage consent and excite sympathy.

Eloquence is living thought,—active, passionate, organized, working to an end. It is the whole utterance of the soul,—thought, feeling, sympathy, and transport fused into oneness, and spoken out. Eloquence receives its unrivalled influence and fascination from this, that it shows us man thinking,—man in the very act of creating wisdom, of flowering into thought. By eloquence the great and manifold intricacies of intents and events are,—

> "Set in all lights by many minds,
> To close the interests of all."

Eloquence narrates, enlightens, proves, excites, inflames, rouses. It is the impassioned energy of man's mind outflowing in words; it is the living reason of man displaying all the active forces which move it, and the great object of the orator is, as Cicero so well says, "Posse voluntates

hominum impeliere quo velit, unde velit deducere" (to be able to move the wills of men whither one wishes, and to withdraw them whence one desires).

Though the newspaper flashes the energy of thought daily into the public mind in vivid, vigorous, sententious, and ornate phrase; the pamphlet sows along the fields of opinion the seed of active and nervous intellectuality; the magazine brightens the whole hemisphere of social life with the light of genius, or the radiancy of a polished reflectiveness; the volume treasures up the sage's thought, the thinker's argumentative cogency, or the poet's fluent ardour; the published sermon distils among the eager crowds the words in which the divine message has been delivered; and the reported speech brings to the eye the phrases employed by those who can expatiate and discourse on matters of interest,—"still, the conjuration and the mighty magic" of personality can never but impart to the speaker's thought "the light that never was on land or sea," and give it a necromantic fascination that will throb into the very soul, and thrill the inner chambers of the heart.

The press is mighty as an engine for instruction, persuasion, and delight; but the living, thought-discharging, passionate fervour of an orator, as he forges and launches forth the volatile essence of his spirit in forms of power and diction of pith, with a speed that defies observation, a resistlessness that brooks no obstacle, and an art that is consummate in its apparent artlessness, is a potency which diffuses animation, ardour, glow, and energy into the audience, and flings the contagious influence of emotion in ever-enwrapping circles closer and closer round the soul; till, whirled into the vortex, it too becomes an incorporate part of the active motion which has been excited, and resigns itself to the overmastering vehemency which captures and captivates it. This special spell the press can never appropriate. The dead, cold columns of type range themselves before the eye, and tell, with exactest minuteness perhaps, the thoughts and words which the speaker expressed; but the animated form, the flashing eye, the tense-strung countenance, the living intonations, the emphasis of feeling, and the concurrent throbbing of many hearts, as the idiomatic utterance of his ideas touches them,

for the time being, into a special unity, are all awanting, and cannot be represented therein. Character, position, power, corporate or individual station, may all be indicated by titles or terms; but the fascination of personality, and of the actual eyewitnessing of thought, coming into being, ripe from the master-spirit who utters it, cannot be conveyed through any phraseological description, however copious, elaborate, sprightly, elegant, or varied. In reading, all these enter the mind in sequent singleness, in one long line of straight-going excursiveness; while in listening, all these converge, concur, and co-operate, with a united, appulsive power upon each individual mind, and so place each under strikingly similar conditions of intellectual activity. The charm is the charm of life; and where the press fails, it fails,—"for life is wanting there."

Outspoken thought is a masterful agency; "Eloquence has charms to lead mankind, and gives a nobler superiority than power, that every dunce may use, or fraud that every knave may employ." Oratory, by the ideas it pours forth, the feelings it excites, and the passions it rouses, exerts a force of unimaginable efficacy. Speech is the expression of thought, oratory of impassioned thought, eloquence of persuasive thought. If suasion is applied to the reason only, the pith of the mind must be uttered; if the power of the passions is to be called in to the aid of the reason to overweight the balance, and procure or secure a decision the quick fervour of emotion must throb from the heart's core into the forth-rushing words, and out of the ardency of the spirit, thought must leap, pervaded and tingling with the very flush and vigour of life. The former will be speech, the latter oratory; yet each, because adapted to the attainment of a given end, may be eloquence. Eloquence at once informs, delights, and persuades; and, by a combination of all, gains the cause it aims at, by realizing the effects it had predetermined to produce.

When intelligence and feeling are applied to and employed in the formation and publication of opinion, they produce a powerful moral force, effective in subjugating many minds, and capable of regulating many events "The right of private judgment" is one which, in its literal terms, all must enjoy. The right of publicly expressing and acting upon the decisions of the private judgment

so long as that utterance or action does not infringe the rights of others, is the true significance of the words—"the freedom of public opinion."

This liberty of free and open discussion, which gives us the opportunity of speaking as we think, and enables public opinion to pervade and check, and perhaps, in the last resort, to rule and overrule the whole legislation of the country, as well as to become "the protector of freedom, a watchful guardian capable of uniting the weak against the encroachments of power," is one of the glorious privileges enjoyed in this fatherland of ours. "There is," as Sir James Mackintosh once said, "still one spot in Europe where man can freely exercise his reason on the most important concerns of society—where he can boldly publish his judgment on the acts of the proudest and most powerful tyrants." In this country public opinion is a power, because it is the result of thought and the basis of action.

Men struggle best and achieve most when their own active energies are employed in the promotion and furtherance of the aims which issue from their own hearts, or in the carrying out of purposes which coincide with them. Positive and enduring benefits become the possession of humanity by effortful activity, not by acquiescent passiveness. Superiority is the result of persevering persistency, self-helping enterprise, and indefatigable striving. Selfhood is manhood; but it is not selfishness: that is the seeking or taking entirely for our own individual gratification, at each special moment in which desire manifests itself, whatever seems, for the time, most likely to appease the excited appetite. Selfishness can neither foresee distant, nor comprehend wide consequences. Its range of vision is, at once, too minute and too contracted to perceive the distinctions between the constant and the accidental sequences in human affairs; and hence it makes us the slaves of feeling, impulse, opportunity, or chance, instead of independent, self-controlling, and strong. Selfishness enervates and prostrates; selfhood invigorates and emancipates. Selfhood is freedom. Liberty consists neither in the absence of constraint nor restraint, but in having a nature capable of being a law unto itself. Liberty implies the capacity and the opportunity of doing or leaving undone any given act or series of acts. If any obstacle

interferes with the exercise of our activity or passivity, or any power or circumstance superior to our own will intervenes to alter the course of our intended exertion or quiescence, we are not free, our individuality has not been respected. To be self-governed is to be free from outward pressure, influence, or compulsion, because the law within ourselves harmonizes us with all that is outward, either in will, circumstance, or event, so far as these may be rightfully operative upon us. And hence it is that to the self-contained, as Milton says, "commands are not constraints."

To make ourselves worthy of exercising this right, and to fit ourselves for taking our due share in the preservation of the wisdom and purity of all public measures, demands from us special effort and endeavour. To acquire a mastery over the arts and mysteries by which public opinion is stirred and formed, and made available for the reversal of wrong or the maintenance of right, for the abolition of evil and the extension of good, is one of the holiest of our social liabilities and functions; and our present endeavour is to aid in the successful accomplishment of this great requirement of civil life and religious fellowship. The highest personal responsibility rests upon each one—for his own welfare and the good of others—to strive to arrive at correct opinions on all social questions, and on all individual obligations. The burden of duty is laid upon all men according to their abilities and opportunities to labour for their own advancement and for the furtherance of the welfare of others. The one great public duty of all men is to give their best thoughts and their most energetic influences towards the realization of that state of social well-being in which the greatest possible happiness of the greatest possible numbers may be enjoyed, "for," as Lord Edward Bulwer Lytton suggests, "the longest period of time, not only as a utilitarian piece of policy, but as a natural and prescriptive right." Each man has, and ought to take, an interest in public affairs; for every avoidable evil, permitted to have place in civil society, presses upon him and all others. He has no right to shirk his responsibilities, and pucker his cheek into smiles of self-approval, as he says, "I never interfere in public affairs; politics don't concern me." This is the age-old excuse of Cain

—"Am I my brother's keeper?" It is selfishness so concentrated as to defeat its own aim. Social life is a compact, and every one has his share of public duty, in one way or other, to do, in carrying out that compact. One plain duty seems to be to form correct opinions upon the ways and means of lessening the evils and increasing the delights of the whole tenantry of the commonwealth. The formation and publication of opinion is one of the first duties, and one of the most important functions of every citizen of a free state,—it ought, in fact, to be regarded as one of the unescapable duties as well as one of the indefeasible "rights of man." Thought desires to realize itself among the potencies which control events; and as it widens itself in ever-increasing circles among the masses of mankind, they pant, and yearn, and strive, and struggle to acquire influence in the ongoings of society, that so they may make thought "the shaping spirit of the future."

Public opinion is the aggregate of the thoughts of a majority of the people. It is not sentiment, or first impressions, or vague notions, or the instinctive stimulant of impulse. It is thought, scrutinizing reflection, examination, and reasoning speculation, expended on matters of fact, interest, and importance. It is the result of well-weighed deliberation, engaged in with the intent of getting at the truth or reality in regard to anything occupying attention. When men's minds are similarly and simultaneously agitated by and engaged in thinking upon a given topic, the conclusions to which many of them come upon or regarding it must be considered alike. The result of this widespread activity of thought — hovering, it may be, shapeless and unexpressed in many minds, but still there — is called public opinion. At length some one appears, who utters

"What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed,"

and that is accepted by the many as the hieroglyph of their ideas. Public opinion has found expression. It is seldom, however, that expression alone suffices for the great interests of man. The activities of life require in most instances to be set in motion, and for this purpose it is found desirable not only to secure a definite and reliable, a recorded statement of this public opinion, but also to orga-

nize the forces of its holders for practical issues. In such cases a public meeting is the common agency employed in our country to test, attest, and embody the decisions arrived at in the exercise of public opinion.

Opinion is the moral force by which political, religious, and social life is moved. The customs of society, the forms of worship, the changes in legislation, are the results, in great measure, of the operations of this force. It is almost vain to resist it; but it is always possible to educate it, to inform it as to the grounds and effects of special acts, usages, or laws. This may be done by the public press; and so far as concerns the intellectual enlightenment of the people, it may be done effectively. But the process by which the individuals of a community are banded and associated into a great, active, spirit-moving unity is by the calling and convening, the addressing and persuading of a public meeting. This exhibits the strength and width of influence any opinion possesses, brings to bear upon each the genial enthusiasm which arises from the sympathy of numbers, excites the activities of the mind and heart, and pours the almost resistless tide of rhetoric and thought into the very inner spirit of men, to set them afloat upon the same current, towards the same aim. As, however, this power is so energetic and pervading, it becomes each so to prepare himself for taking his part in the common duty of life, as to be ready to "judge righteous judgment" on public questions; and to guard against misleading others or being misled himself. Each ought, in short, to fit himself for taking an intelligent place in any public meeting to which he may be called.

Opinions, however, may be and often are different. "Many men, many minds," has passed into a proverb to signify that fact. Public opinion, therefore, is often divided, and the strength of one view or another can only be learned after expository and controversial consideration. This requires a course of conduct in the persons taking part in the excitement or the direction of public opinion, which is likely to subserve the ends in view. Certain methods of action and modes of procedure have commended themselves, by experience, as being best for the effecting of these purposes, and on reflection are found to be conformable, for the most part, to the rules of justice and order. We

have in previous works expounded the processes found most beneficial and satisfactory on the intellectual side.* We now intend to explain so much of the *modus operandi* of public meetings as suggests itself to us, as likely to be useful in guiding and informing our readers in the art of carrying on those assemblies of the people in which they have the privilege of taking part, and which it is often their duty to attend—a topic which, so far as we are aware, has not yet been reduced to a brief and comprehensible handy exposition, yet one which seems to be not only likely to be useful but greatly requisite.

CHAPTER II.

THE RIGHT OF PUBLIC MEETING:—ITS UTILITY AND THE ADVANTAGES OF IT.

ENGLISHMEN set a high value on the right of assembling themselves together for the purpose of discussing public affairs and questions of general interest, or of practical importance. They give it a foremost place amongst their constitutional privileges and prerogatives. The right of petition for the redress of grievances, complaints against wrongs or oppressions, assertion of rights and maintenance of privileges, suggestions for reform or the consideration of questions of general or special policy, as it is interpreted since the Revolution of 1688, implies the right of public meeting for deliberation on any matter affecting the social, civic, national, or religious interests of the community. The government of this country is professedly a government carried on by the legalization of public opinion duly proved and approved; hence the utmost latitude, consistent with the preservation of good order and the protective defence of established interests is justly demanded for the formation and expression of public opinion. The due form of influencing the general community, and of proving to the holders of the management of any corporate body, whether of a friendly society or of the nation, the propriety, expediency,

* See "Composition and Elocution;" also "The Young Debater," chapters v.—vii., and "The Art of Public Speaking," *passim*.

or justice of making a change is the calling and holding of a public meeting.

This recognition of the unity of interests in the whole mass of the people, this implied assertion that anything which affects the condition of any class of citizens, possesses an effect also on the entire community, this opportunity accorded to each one to feel that his opinion is of some weight in the on-carrying of the business of the community of which he is a unit, this compacting of the whole nation into a self-governing and representative aggregate, is a peculiar feature of British society. This freedom of thinking in public, as we may call it, induces honesty of political life, trustworthiness in the management of national concerns, and confidence in the ultimate triumph of the best opinions in the long run. It not only encourages patience, but excites perseverance; it subdues perverseness while it gratifies patriotism. It admits of the firstling still small voice of a new movement being heard, and it permits the loud acclamation of a successful cause to be brought prominently under the notice of those who listen to the opinions of the people duly enlightened, properly and respectfully expressed, as indices of the course to be pursued by the representative, legislative, or executive portions of the management or government.

If a grievance is felt, an abuse requires to be reformed, an improvement seems worthy of suggestion, a right needs enforcement, a claim is to be instituted, an amendment or revocation of a legislative measure excites attention, a cause demands advocacy,—the first duty of those who feel the need, and favour the change, is to enlighten, form, excite, and bring into manifest being, a public opinion in regard to the question involved, whether it relates to religion, morals, law, politics, taxation, the distribution of the public wealth, the incidence of public policy, or the alteration of any of the forms, processes, or requirements of civil or social life. These questions may be placed before the public in books, pamphlets, newspaper articles, &c., and so may be transfused into the public mind; but so long as this alone is done, so long as the public is virtually silent, the agitation is powerless and ineffective. It may be politic to saturate the public mind with the opinions desired, and their grounds; and it is often advantageous to do so, but the only way to

give it force is to concentrate it in a public meeting, and to pass it there into resolutions, which are at once a pledge and a challenge—thus is the diffused electricity of the opinions of the people concentrated and brought into a condition for being effectively and forcefully discharged in fulfilment of its functions.

Society is not only largely interested in discussing the best means of increasing the grand total of human happiness, and in determining on the course to be pursued by the nation in its collective capacity for the attainment, diffusion, and security of the greatest general good; in considering the adequacy of the means proposed or employed for the behoof of the community at large, and in deciding upon the relative advantageousness of one or another mode of promoting the common welfare of good citizens; it is also very much interested in the general diffusion of habits of clear and sound thinking, the power of comprehending the incidence of facts, and of deducing correct inferences from these facts. Forethought and foresight, a cautious appreciation of consequences, and a true insight into the properties of things; a judicious exercise of the reasoning faculties, and a readiness to be ruled by what is found to be true and right, are most important elements in the prosperity of society, and those means by which these powers are excited or exercised deserve and require most careful preservation, and most thorough constancy of use. Public meetings constitute a practical education in the management of thought and men, as well as agencies for initiating reforms and effecting changes.

The combination of progress with order results in the highest form of civic as of individual life. So long as the human mind is capable of suggesting improvements upon the condition or in the practices of men, there ought to be not only permission for, but also a proper opportunity and form of bringing these suggestions before those interested in the promotion or possession of improved means of life and comfort. But these ought not to be so brought forward as to destroy or impair the present acquiescence in and compliance with the collective arrangements, institutions, and regulations of society, or to become subversive of social order. Order must be preserved that progress may be possible. Hence arises the necessity, and herein appears

the advantage of some means of preparing men's minds for the changes which progress demands, without meanwhile injuring or lessening the stability, security, and harmony of society, as constituted. Social order being maintained, progress is at liberty to make such suggestions as it chooses, to place them before the public in such forms as may be considered to be most advisable, and is at length permitted to use the heat of popular controversy at a public meeting, to ripen the opinion of the people upon the given topic.

CHAPTER III.

ON OPINION, PUBLIC OPINION, AND THE MEANS OF INFLUENCING IT.

OPINION is the name given to that peculiar judgment of the mind which it forms concerning any event, statement, proposition, or theory, the truth or falsehood, accuracy or inaccuracy of which is supported by a degree of evidence which renders it probable or improbable, but which does not impart certainty or insure entire conviction. The word is directly derived from the Latin *opinio*, which signifies a conjecture formed on probable evidence, a supposition founded on general rumour, or a guess hazarded as a solution of a difficulty, and uttered with an impression of its being near the truth or likelihood of the matter. This definition agrees with that of him

> "in whom
> Our British Themis gloried with just cause.
> Immortal Hale! for deep discernment praised,
> And sound integrity, not more than famed
> For sanctity of manners undefiled."

Sir Matthew Hale says, "Opinion is when the assent of the understanding is so far gained by evidence of probability that it rather inclines to one persuasion than another; yet not without a mixture of uncertainty or doubting." The differences of opinion among men on the most important matters affecting human life and the constitution of civil society, verifies and confirms this definition. Opinion is not faith, or a change of opinion would be apostasy; nor is it settled truth, for were it so men's convictions could not

vary: its very root implies that it is a conclusion come to on speculative matter, and which is therefore honourably changeable when knowledge has become more accurate, or results have shown that the decision was made upon erroneous premises or assumptions. To change one's opinions is venial; to be false to one's principles is regarded as base, for principles are the first truths on which the mind relies, which therefore are laid down as permanent, while opinion consists of inferences founded on them and compared with facts. Right principles do not necessarily imply right opinions, for the results may be vitiated in the process of reasoning, or in the interpretation of the facts brought into connection with the principle as a second premiss; nor do correct opinions imply accurate and indubitable principles, for the opinions may be formed without reference to, though professedly grounded upon, principles of judgment. Principles ought to overrule opinions; but opinions very often override and overrule the best principles.

"Opinions," says Prof. Ferrier, "are optional thoughts, arbitrary excogitations, thoughts which we may entertain or not, just as we please. We may maintain an opinion, we may also maintain its converse; at least it is not impossible to maintain the converse of any opinion that may be formed, for that is precisely what is meant by an opinion; it is a thought which we can help thinking, and in the place of which we may, by possibility at least, entertain the opposite thought. To define opinion almost in a word, I should say that opinions are thoughts which we can help thinking." "In Platonic Greek, *doxa*, or opinion, is the term by which the faculty of the apparent is designated, *episteme* (positive knowledge, science) designates the faculty by which the real is apprehended." "Reason in one man listens to nothing but reason in another; thought, genuine thought, in one mind, responds only to the call of genuine thought in another mind. But thoughts, in order to be genuine, in order to have root, must coexist in vital and organic unity, and not as a tissue of floating fragmentary opinions," in which there is no true reliance for the soul. Logic deals with principles, rhetoric with opinions.

"Absolute certainty and fixed science," says De Quincey, "transcend opinion and exclude the probable. The province

of rhetoric, whether meant for an influence upon the actions or simply upon the belief, lies among that vast field of cases where there is a *pro* and a *con.*, with the chance of right and wrong, true and false, distributed in varying proportions between them. There is also an immense range of truths where there are no chances at all concerned, but the affirmative and the negative are both true; as, for example, the goodness of human nature and its wickedness; the happiness of human life and its misery; the charms of knowledge and its hollowness; the fragility of human prosperity in the eye of religious meditation, and its security as estimated by worldly confidence and youthful hope. In all such cases the rhetorician exhibits his art by giving an impulse to one side, and by withdrawing the mind so steadily from all thoughts or images which support the other, as to leave it practically under the possession of a one-sided estimate."

To the same effect is Hazlitt's remark that, "In matters of absolute demonstration and speculative indifference, I grant that belief is involuntary and the proof not to be resisted; but in such matters there is no difference of opinion, or the difference is adjusted amicably and rationally;" but "in all cases not of this peremptory and determinate cast, and where disputes commonly arise, inclination, habit, and example have a powerful share in throwing in the casting-weight in our opinions." "What are national antipathies, individual attachments, but so many expressions of the *moral* principle in forming our opinions? All our opinions become grounds on which we act, and build our expectations of good or ill; and this good or ill mixed up with them is soon changed into the ruling principle, which modifies or violently supersedes the original cool determination of the reason and the senses. The will, when it once gets a footing, turns the sober judgment out of doors." "If we wish a thing we are disposed to believe it; if we have been accustomed to believe it, we are the more obstinate in defending it on that account; if all the world differ from us in any question of moment, we are ashamed to own it, or are hurried by peevishness and irritation into extravagance and paradox. The weight of example presses upon us (whether we feel it or not) like the law of gravitation."

Here is the secret of the might of public meetings—the force of example and the sympathy of numbers. The object of a public meeting is to excite a unity of sympathy, attention, thought, and emotion, upon a given subject; to bring out a fellowship of feeling and thinking upon it; to interwork the emotions of men so as to elicit an approving consent to some idea, or to produce some disapproving sentiment against new or prevailing notions, sentiments, acts, or facts. The sympathy for and agreement in the proposals made at a public meeting bind the active spirits attending it to a propagation of the same opinions, either in self-defence or in self-sufficiency, and hence the force of example is brought closely to bear, not only on the persons present at a meeting, but upon all in whom effective persuasion may be wrought by them. A public meeting not only brings under the direct action of the law of sympathy and the might of example those who were present, but also diffuses through society this force of sympathy and this might of example, to work into other and wider circles the opinions there promulgated. By passage, from mind to mind, of these influences, a public opinion is formed,—a public opinion vigorous with excited sympathy and fellow-feeling, and with the vital energy of social co-operation.

> "'Tis in the advance of individual minds
> That the slow crowds must ground their expectation
> Eventually to follow: as the sea
> Waits ages in its bed, till some one wave,
> Of all the multitudinous mass, extends
> The empire of the whole some feet, perhaps,
> Over the strip of sand which could confine
> Its fellows so long time; thenceforth the rest,
> Even to the meanest, hurry in at once,
> And so much is clear gained."

So is it with the growth of public opinion. It is a gradual process: a thought issues from some solitary thinker, not always some

> "Pre-eminent mortal, some great soul of souls,"

and strikes into the sympathetic spirit of others, who diffuse it with a ready heart and a willing mind until it gathers force and confidence. Then the sympathizers league together and form the thought into a phrase and watchword; it becomes known, passes from lip to lip,

begets reflection and interest; some spirit, animated with zeal, brings it before the minds of men in eloquent or rhetorical exposition, and the hearts of men, glowing with a simultaneous enthusiasm, take it into their souls as a conviction and a creed.

The power of will over opinion through the medium of discourse is well understood by all observing men. Discourse governs opinion and opinion rules the world, so that "public opinion," as Jeremy Bentham has it, "may be considered as a system of law, emanating from the body of the people. If there be no individually assignable form of words in and by which it stands expressed, it is but on a par in this particular with that rule of action which, emanating as it does from lawyers, official and professional, and not sanctioned by the legislative authority otherwise than by tacit sufferance, is in England designated *common law*. To the pernicious exercise of the power of government it is the only check; to the beneficial, an indispensable supplement. Able rulers lead it; prudent rulers lead or follow it; foolish rulers disregard it. Even at the present stage in the career of civilization its dictates coincide on most points with those of *the greatest happiness principle*. On some, however, it still deviates from them; but, as its deviations have long been less and less numerous and less wide, sooner or later they will cease to be discernible, aberration will vanish, coincidence will be complete."

CHAPTER IV.

PUBLIC MEETINGS AND THEIR PROMOTERS.

WHAT is a public meeting? It is a deliberative assembly, convened for the purpose of considering a determinate subject, with the intent of expressing regarding it a united and therefore strong opinion, or of deciding upon a united course of action in connection with it. A public meeting consists, in general, of a body of persons interested in the agitation of a question, anxious to secure its due discussion, or to gain an expression of opinion in favour of their own view of some

given matter. These may be regarded as the promoters or originators of the meeting. They usually form the centre of emanation and of initiation. They undertake all the preliminary negotiations regarding the meeting, accept the responsibilities of expense and of conducting, issue or see to the issuing of proper announcements, and are prepared to take part in one form or another in the carrying on of the proceedings. On those parties it customarily falls to determine upon the outline of the business to be overtaken, to settle the form the meeting shall assume, and to arrange for the adaptation of these forms, and the methods by which they are to be worked to the usages of the given locality. They, in most cases, possess some idea of the sympathies of the people in the district, of the manner in which the proposed advocacy—whatever it is—may be most effectively harmonized with the ordinary habits of thought or life of the inhabitants of the place; and of the men by whose countenance and support the greatest amount of influence in its behalf may be exerted. They are men who do not hesitate to identify themselves publicly with the movement, and who, from position or other circumstances, have weight with the parties likely to attend. The initiators, or "getters up," of a public meeting, while they ought neither to thrust themselves nor their opinions upon the public, ought to show how their sympathy lies with regard to the subject to be brought under consideration; hence they and their friends usually occupy the platform, often suggest and nominate a chairman, support the several speakers, and maintain the dignity of the chairman, should a necessity for enforcing order ensue. It lies with them, however, and it is often advisable, to confer with others of an opposite opinion, to offer them a share of the platform, and to consult and even arrange with them regarding the nomination of an acceptable chairman. They have, however, no right to intrude a chairman without the consent, by vote, of the meeting, or their assent by silence or otherwise, unless due intimation has been made of the intent to exercise that right, when, of course, every person who attends is bound by that precondition and announced arrangement.

By courtesy, the initiators of a public meeting are allowed to indicate the course of business, to lay a plan for conducting it before the meeting through the chairman, to

put forward the speakers of their own choice—though not to the exclusion of others,—and to table the resolutions, if any, which they intend to offer for the adoption of that meeting after due consideration, and in fact, so far as regards their aim, to—

> "Foreshape the minds of men,
> That by the acclaim of most, if not of all,
> It shall be hailed acceptable."

Besides this party, however, there is another, viz., that one from which the species of meeting of which we write derives its name, *i.e.*, the Public. The public consists of all persons to whom the terms of intimation—according to which the meeting takes place—apply. Every meeting is called, as we have said, by some parties who take the initiative; these persons having settled upon their purpose and method of procedure, and having issued invitations to the public in certain specific terms, have a right to expect that the public shall respect these terms, as the presence of each person in that assembly is permissible only upon the supposition that he agrees to these terms, and so long only as he adheres to them. The concourse is regarded as having come together for the expressed and ostensible purpose specified in the advertisement, and has no right to divert or to strive to divert it from that expressed purpose. But any course of conduct compatible with the terms of invitation may be adopted and carried out, whether that accord with the original intents and plans, wishes and programme of the promoters or not. To attempt to wrest the meeting from its main design is unjustifiable, because it violates the condition of the assembly; but within the limits of and consistent with that stipulated and concurrent prerequisite, the public has the right of doing whatsoever seems fair at the time and in the circumstance; except to break the common laws of the land.

These preliminaries being held in mind, we may now proceed to define more closely and accurately, and say that a public meeting is an assemblage of the inhabitants, &c., of any specified locality, for a distinct and intimated purpose, voluntarily congregated in accordance with the terms of invitation (in a manner permitted by law or custom), under a president of their own free choice (by assent or consent),

for the consideration of, (by listening to addresses or to a discussion upon) an announced topic, and, with regard to the proposed end, in a manner consistent with common law, fair play, and general courtesy.

It is the duty of all the parties to a public meeting to reconcile the freedom they claim to the convenience and good-pleasure of others, and to combine with the full, free, and honest advocacy and expression of their own opinions a sense of self-respect and good-will and charity to all. In our extreme haste after truth, sincerity, and progress, we must not forget delicacy, considerateness, and toleration. We must give credit to the maintainers of the *status quo ante* for equal honesty and social worth, as we would to the most advanced thinkers in their impatience of wrong and bigotry, of obstructive and conservative zeal. Sinister cunning, abusive language, wholesale denunciations, the stirring up of strifes and animosities, and beyond all, the use of brute force, or the transformation of a public meeting into a faction fight, are condemnable, by whomsoever practised, as opposed alike to true, that is, intelligent progress and honest social co-operation.

Men, when in public meeting assembled, are very far from being absolved from attention to the general principles which regulate and sweeten social intercourse, and govern the forms and methods of external manners—the large grasp on human life which etiquette holds—the need of submitting to the conventional ceremonies and modes of action prevalent in properly conducted society. Sympathy with, attention and deference to, respect for and kindliness towards others are as incumbent on the frequenter of a public meeting as they are in any other place where men are brought into contact and intercourse. The suppression of egotism, and the need for keeping in view the gratification of others are essential to good order and their attention and improvement. We do grievous wrong to ourselves and the cause we espouse when we employ or connive at the exercise of malice, envy, guile, hypocrisy, evil-speaking, or uncharitableness in public meetings; we ought rather to look upon these as occasions when we may justly—

> "Unbank the hours
> To that soft overflow which bids the heart
> Yield increase of delight."

We do not affirm that free comment, criticism, strong speech and even wit, sarcasm and indignation, are always out of order; but that they ought to be kept in proper place, and used with all due and requisite discretion, while we most sedulously avoid—

"All outward flourishes of empty anger."

In every public meeting there are different parties, each of whom possesses certain rights, to which certain duties correspond. These may be conveniently classified as follows, viz. :—1, the promoters; 2, the chairman; 3, the speakers; 4, the hearers and voters.

The general constituents of a public meeting are, in reality and more comprehensively,—1, the chairman; 2, the committee or promoters; 3, the secretary or clerk of committee (chairman's assessor, adviser, &c.); 4, speakers; 5, platformists or sympathizers; 6, the audience. These may be briefly defined at present in the following terms, the rights and duties of most of them will hereafter be more specifically treated of in the sequel ;—

1. The chairman is the presiding and managing chief officer of an assembly, association, company, meeting, committee, deliberative convocation, &c.

2. The committee or promoters. A committee consists of one or more persons, elected, appointed, or entrusted to mature, arrange, or manage, in a preliminary manner, any affair, business, or duty to which his or their commission extends —the person or persons to whom the performance of any specific duty has been allotted or committed; promoters are those who have taken upon themselves the management, furtherance, or maturing of any particular scheme or affair —they are, in general, a self-constituted committee.

3. Secretary or clerk. A person in whom confidence is reposed, and who is employed by any public body, company, committee, or assembly [it may be an individual], to write orders, letters, despatches, records, &c., in name and on behalf of those whose business he transacts representatively —the person who records all that has been officially and correctly done, and to whom the proper minuting of the same is confided—sometimes an adviser or subordinate officer with fixed duties and responsibilities.

4. Speakers. Those who address an assembly. These

may be either persons requested by the committee and announced to the public, persons allowed by them to speak, or persons, from the ranks of the meeting, claiming the right of members of a deliberative assembly to speak on the matter under review.

5. Platformists is a word employed to designate those persons who have not taken any active part in the proceedings preliminary to the meeting, but who sympathize with and desire to encourage the object of it, and whose appearance on the platform may exert an influence in favour of the cause to be advocated at it.

6. The audience—those who assemble in accordance with the requisition by which the meeting has been called, and who either assent to the terms therein proposed, or succeed, in an orderly and peaceable way, in getting these modified, qualified, or arranged to their satisfaction. Those who do not assent to the terms form, properly speaking, no part of the meeting—they are there on sufferance not of right.

An exposition of the duties, and the rights of these parties respectively will profitably occupy our attention for a brief space hereafter. But we may now proceed to the consideration of the method and laws which ought to regulate and govern the conduct of business, and the courtesies which demand attention in the carrying on of the affairs which arise in the course of a public meeting; for, due regard being had to these, the happiness of all will be provided for as far as may be, and the transaction of the business of any meeting will be greatly facilitated.

Of course, the supreme law of human life, in so far as refers to corporate or public action, is justice to all, *i.e.*, not only yielding to every man his rights, but maintaining them for him in all equity, considerateness, and honour; and the supreme requirement of public life is order, *i.e.*, the harmonious copartnership of each part in a whole, for the greatest good of each individual in himself, and of all as a constituted unity. To secure justice and order, rights must be known, exercised, allowed, and maintained, and duties must be honestly and intelligently performed. Rights and duties are reciprocal. Those who neglect their duties cannot justly insist upon having their rights; and those who do not exercise and maintain their rights are little likely to be exceedingly regardful of their duties. "Man," says Dr.

Whewell, "acts as man when he acts under the influence of reason, and reason directs us to rules. Rules of action are necessary, therefore, for the action of man as man. We cannot conceive man as man without conceiving him as subject to rules, and making part of an order in which rules prevail." Rules are the reasonable determinations of men regarding the right, the fitting, the just. Rules are a safeguard alike to individuals and to society. To determine the rules, then, by which the rights of men in public meetings assembled may be most accurately brought into consistency and harmony with the laws of justice and the requirements of order, must be beneficial, especially in a country such as ours is, where both law and custom sanction the congregation of large masses of the body politic to consider questions of general interest or of local importance. We intend, therefore, to endeavour to show our readers not only the ordinary rules by which, implicitly or explicitly, by custom, consent, or general agreement, public meetings are in general governed, but also to indicate on what principles of justice they are founded, or what condition of order they tend to promote. In a great measure these have been hitherto unwritten rather than statute laws, *i.e.*, the results of immemorial and general usage rather than predetermined and ordained enactments. These laws we aim at digesting and making available for general guidance and information, and occasionally we may be found explaining or interpreting these laws or rules of action.

The legal right of public meeting depends upon the general and fundamental principle, that Society exists for the protection of the several individuals composing it, and Government for the maintenance of society. In accordance with this principle, English law guarantees civil liberty to all the subjects of the British empire. Civil liberty signifies the due and proper exercise of all the powers, faculties, and capacities of the individual, in so far as their operations are not injurious to or destructive of the like liberty in others, *i.e.*, restrained only so far as is requisite for the good and safety of society. This is the primary right of an Englishman. But to secure and maintain it, some subordinate rights are regarded as implied by and in, this head and paramount of human rights,—such as the right of self-defence or self-preservation; from which proceed the right

of representation, the right of duly administered justice, the right of protection against the tyranny of the State, *i.e.*, the executive of society,—and the right of petitioning against grievances, that is, of advocating measures of improvement. Under one or other of these principles of protective law, all cases of public meetings may be brought, as in some way or other meant to insure the public against any preventible injury to, or illegal diminution of, the individual freedom of the lieges. This legal right can only be withdrawn or denied when there is good and true cause for the interference of the executive, in order that a violation of order or a breach of the rights of others may be prevented; or there is good ground for fearing that, in the exercise of this right, a great wrong would be likely to arise. Unless on some such grounds as these, the right of public meeting is as indefeasible as the right to the enjoyment of life, limb, body, health, reputation, and duly acquired and rightly possessed private property. The right of public meeting being based on natural freedom, sanctioned by natural law and general custom, it ought to be exercised in subordination to those elements on which its possibility and allowability depend; and on the supposition that it is so, we proceed to indicate the principles and laws by which public meetings should be and are, in general, regulated.

CHAPTER V.

THE CONVENING OF PUBLIC MEETINGS.

THE promoters of a public meeting, instead of merely leaguing together to convene it as at their own option and impulse, may wish to impart a more formal and important character to it by applying to some recognised official personage, of whose function it forms a part, to call a meeting. This is usually done by the presentation of a requisition signed by the projectors, and addressed, in the usual terms of formal courtesy, to that official, requesting him, in a respectful manner, to call a meeting, on as early a day as possible, of the persons interested in the question. In this requisition it is usual, in clear, brief terms, to express the purpose of the meeting, and to explain in precise though not

finically exact words the class or classes of persons whom it is thought desirable to bring forward. If this official see fit to grant the request thus forwarded to him, and to agree to the convening of such an assembly, it is his duty to call the meeting in the precise terms employed, as to the purpose of the meeting and the class of persons to be summoned, by the requisitionists; for if he were to do otherwise, he would in reality call a different meeting from that projected and required. If he see fit to decline, he may either do so in the ordinary official, formal, and courteous manner, or he may condescend to a statement of reasons. If the reasons appear to the promoters valid, they will accept his terms; if not, they will proceed on their own responsibility, or, deferring to his judgment or authority, abandon their design. A formal declinature admits of no question, but is not generally regarded as prohibitory. The requisitionists are, therefore, free to proceed on their own liability to call and to conduct such a meeting as they wish. If there were any illegality in the object proposed, or in the intended manner of carrying it out, it would be the duty of the official to intimate the same to the projectors as at once a guide and a warning. Failing that, they are fairly entitled to assume—so far as any infraction of his rights or claims are concerned—the lawfulness of assembling. Intimations of meetings may assume any outward form, but they must each contain a distinct statement of the place where, time when, the purpose for which, &c., the meeting is to be held, with a clear and accurate indication of the persons who are expected and invited. It would be unfair to do otherwise; for the parties interested would not know that they should attend, and those who were not wished might attend. Hence it is of importance, both as an act of justice and an adjunct to order, that the announcements by which a meeting is called should enunciate distinctly the persons to whom appeal is to be made, *i. e.*, if all or only a part of the inhabitants of a place are free to come; and if only a part, what part,—a sect, a profession, a class, a political party, or any other specific division of the people. Those only who are thus called have a just *right* to attend and take part in the proceedings of the meeting—unless that is permitted tacitly or expressly by the promoters; and only that business can be done for which the meeting is called.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PROMOTERS OF A PUBLIC MEETING—THEIR RIGHTS AND DUTIES.

THE promoters of a public meeting have a *right* to determine its object, define its aim, arrange a programme of its procedure, suggest or nominate a chairman, put forward speakers to expound their views, secure a place for the meeting, issue invitations or intimations, and undertake the pecuniary responsibilities falling due in respect of such arrangements and their results. It is their *duty*, in making their announcements, to be distinct and explicit in their statement of the object of the meeting and of the parties who are invited to it; in arranging their programme, to allow free scope for the full and fair consideration of the subject, and for the proper collection and registration of the honest voice of the persons present,—without packing and in accordance with the terms of summons; in the actual conducting of it to arrange for and to permit the free and honest hearing, on the stipulated terms, of those who differ from as well as of those who agree with themselves; and to choose for election a just and impartial man as president, one not basely pledged to partisanship, and one entitled to the respect of the public, or such section of it as may attend; and generally, however much they may be interested in the gaining of their point, to submit to and adhere to any resolution upon the subject,—plainly indicative of the voice of the meeting,—if given in accordance with the terms of the calling of it and the statement of its purpose.

In defining the object of consideration, the promoters of a meeting have the right to indicate their opinion on the subject, but they have no right to present an issue to the public which affords no scope for thought or debate, but demands acceptance and consent only. It is open to them, however, to invite the presence of those only who favour a special view; but in so far as this limits the attendance, it ceases to be a public and becomes a private meeting. Again, they possess the right of inviting whomsoever they choose, but they have no right to pack the meeting with persons favourable to their views; for in so far as that is

done, it ceases to be what it is represented to be,—a *public* meeting; neither has an opposing party a right to pack their meeting with persons inimical to their design. The duty of each is to give and to get fair play, and hence all must act honestly.

In arranging the conditions of a public meeting, the promoters have a right to provide for the full and thorough exposition of their views; but they have no right to ask the public to pronounce definitively in favour of their views on any such *ex parte* or one-sided statement. It is their duty to arrange for the expression of counter-views, if any, and to supply facilities for their being heard. The neglect of such provisions militates against it as a public meeting, and degrades it to a mere partisan assembly.

Though the right of suggesting or nominating a chair man resides in the promoters, in the first instance, they have no right to force the chairman of their choice upon the meeting,—unless a previous announcement to the effect, that a certain person shall preside, shall have been made, when it becomes one of the preconditions to which attendance at the meeting binds each,—but it is their duty, unless in the aforesaid case, to afford the public convened an opportunity to decide upon the person to whose presidency they shall resign themselves in the consideration of the given subject. It is their duty further to sustain the authority of the person so chosen, to supply him with all requisite information regarding the purport, and to furnish him with a correct copy of the announcement of the meeting, as well as with a note of the [intended] programme, as regards resolutions, speakers, &c.

It is the duty of the mover and seconder to accompany the elected chairman to his seat, and then either occupy the places on his right and left hand respectively, or retire to their former places. They have, and those with whom they act, become not only responsible to the public for his suitableness, but have made themselves justly responsible to him for support and safety in the execution of his duty during the tenure of his temporary office; and they ought to be prepared to abide by and perform their sponsorship. Here the duty of the promoters of the meeting cease. They pass into and form a part of the meeting, and, unless by courtesy, possess only the common rights of the general public.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CHAIRMAN—HIS NOMINATION, ELECTION, RIGHTS, AND DUTIES.

THE nomination of a chairman is, as we have said, in the first instance, by courtesy, as well as on account of the convenience in which it frequently results, left to the promoters of the meeting. It is presumed that they have made themselves acquainted with the merits of the gentleman they name—his influence, ability, impartiality, respectability, station, habit or power of self-control,—in short, his general fitness for the duty of the station. Provision, therefore, is generally made prior to entering the meeting for the due proposing and seconding of a chairman. When the promoters of the meeting, under this common understanding, have proceeded to and taken their places on the platform, or other locality regarded as the position in chief in the hall or room, one of their number, previously selected, should proceed to nominate and propose the person who has been selected; this is generally done without speech or parade as soon as the promoters have taken their seats, by the use of some such words as these,—"I move that ——— do now take the chair," by the proposer. After waiting a moment to allow of support for the motion to come from the body of the meeting—if no one seems inclined to meddle in the matter,—another promoter ought to rise and say, "I second the motion." There should be no speaking by either party—for as yet there is no meeting *constituted*. After the first motion has been seconded (or if it is not seconded), the proposal of another person reverts to the meeting, and any one may propose the name of an individual whom he regards as equally or better qualified to occupy the chair, and likely to be more acceptable to the meeting. Similar amendments may be proposed, and, if seconded, continued, till the acclamations of the meeting decide that the right person has been named for acceptance. If there is no objection taken the election is complete, and the gentleman indicated has a just right to step forward to his place as chairman. If, however, an amendment is proposed by the nomination of another person, and that is duly seconded, the original pro-

poser becomes *pro tem.* chairman, or rather arbiter, and asks the vote of the assembly on the question, unless the applause of the meeting itself makes it plain that one or other of the gentlemen proposed possesses the voice of the house. When the chair is taken the meeting is *constituted.*

The chairman is the delegate of the meeting. To him the individuals composing it assign the duty and impart the right of governing them. To him is entrusted the sole authoritative voice in the assembly, and to the maintenance of his dignity and official power each individual in the meeting is held as if distinctly pledged. That the true purposes of public meetings may be effected, the chairman has certain rights conferred upon him by convention or common usage, and he is also considered to be in honour bound to the performance of certain duties. He has a right to attention, obedience, courtesy, and an admission of his fitness and claim to the precedence granted, on the occasion, to him. He is entitled to respectful address, to the protection of the meeting, and to the immediate submission of any person in the meeting to any fair decision he may make, or else to firm, but judicious and polite protest and opposition—never carried, however, beyond the evident feeling of the meeting. He has a claim on the indulgence of the public also, as far as that indulgence is not detrimental to the interests involved in the objects of the meeting. It is his duty, on the other hand, to be attentive, impartial, conciliatory, urbane, considerate to the speakers, sympathetic with the public, careful of the course and progress of the business, and decided in his demand for order, and in the maintenance of good faith and justice. He must divest himself of prepossessions, oppose any attempt to manage the meeting by chicanery, keep the speakers to the point, put motions and amendments in proper form and order, watch the state of votes carefully, restrain any disturbance, and strictly insist on peace and propriety.

That these objects may be most effectively realized, it is advisable that the chairman have a conspicuous position awarded to him, somewhat separated from all the parties to or at the meeting; that he hold no private converse with any person whatever during the progress of business, and that he note, in order, the persons who have claimed or gained the right of hearing, according to the ordinary sys-

tem prevalent in the place; and sternly insist on each adhering to the terms or customs of address in vogue. It is a good and wholesome usage that the chairman should read, or cause to be read, the announcement of the meeting, should briefly indicate "the state of the question," should inform the meeting of the views and aims of the projectors or promoters, and of the order of procedure which they advise—if they have prepared any, and if not, of that which he regards as best. Counsels and cautions as to the claims he will make upon the meeting, as to what they may expect from him, and as to what he will require from the speakers, are thereafter usually made: whereupon—unless occasion arise for official interference or explanation on points of order, precedence, &c.—it is understood that the chairman shall take no farther active part in the conducting of the business, except to put motions or amendments; and especially that he shall eschew advocacy of any sort in reference to the subject or subjects of consideration at the meeting.

A chairman is often popularly believed to be endowed with some mysterious power or authority demanding obedience, submission, and respect, and conferring upon him certain undefined but binding rights; but he has in reality no such power, in the sense of special title or demand, to do something which he would otherwise have no right to do or demand. He is the creature of convention, and has his place and position merely as a matter of convenience. He is there to constitute the meeting and initiate proceedings, to preserve order, because without order business could not be gone on with, and to take such measures as are best fitted to ascertain the will, pleasure, or opinion of the audience; but he has no legal repressive or punitive power. He acquires all his power and influence from the fact that by electing him—or attending a meeting under his announced presidency—the members of the meeting have mutually, though tacitly it may be, agreed to accept his government, obey his suggestions, and abide by his decision; while by his occupancy of the chair he is held to be pledged to impartiality, to abstain from taking any part in the deliberative business for which the meeting has been called, and generally to see justice and fair play, as far as he can, administered to all in accordance with the purport of the assembly.

A chairman—unless by special and previous arrangement some other understanding has been come to—has only one vote. It is a point of etiquette that he abstains from voting in precedence of the meeting, so that he may not show how his opinion inclines, and thus bias those who may be supposed to be under his influence; and hence the uselessness, in general, of his having a casting vote; for in the event of a numerical equality of votes, his being reserved to the last in reality becomes the casting vote; though in some instances of meetings held under the sanction of Acts of Parliament, a casting vote is expressly granted to the President of the Meeting. These cases, of course, must be determined by the Acts referring to them. In the House of Commons the Speaker does not vote at all, unless where the votes are equally divided, in which case he is empowered to *cast* the balance on the one side or the other; hence the term *casting* vote. As the Speaker's duty is to withdraw himself from the contentions of party, and to abstain from any defined action which would indicate that he was influenced by partisanship, the use of the casting vote often becomes a matter of great delicacy as well as importance. As a general rule, a very safe one in assemblies where the majority prevails, it is the recognised and expected custom, that the speaker gives his vote in such a way as may leave with the House the opportunity of reconsidering the subject, and of more thoroughly maturing its views on the matter under discussion. In this way, though his own opinion and conviction may be well known to be on the other side, he generally *casts* his vote with the *status quo ante* party, on the ground that if it was really felt to be right, proper, and fitting, the proposal made would have secured for itself a greater acceptance with the members of the assembly than the equal vote indicates. In the Select Committees of the House the same general rule prevails; and in most corporate meetings, and in meetings involving responsibility, the example of the House is usually followed on this point. This seems to be a mode of proceeding especially advisable in general meetings; for as it may be presumed that the promoters of such convocations make a point of selecting a chairman favourable to their own views in case of an equality of votes, the success of their purpose would be a foregone conclusion. In meetings of business

in which immediate pecuniary responsibilities may by that vote be brought upon the members of the meeting and those whom they represent, the use of the casting vote becomes a duty of an intricate and trying nature. The chairman then, as it were, becomes umpire of two contending parties in whose case arbitration has failed, and it becomes his duty to show that he has preserved the impartiality to which he is pledged as chairman, by eliminating, as far as possible, his own interest from his view of the case, and giving the casting vote in favour of the party who had most reason on their side. In some cases, however, the chairman of such a meeting is specially accepted, as not only the representative but the champion of the cause—bank, railway, finance company, &c., as the case may be—to be maintained, and as being so, can, without disappointing any fair expectation, give the casting vote in favour of that resolution which he is known to favour. Should the chosen or official chairman of any meeting feel that he cannot fairly to himself or his cause denude himself of the opportunity of advocating his own views, or of taking a particular course, it is regarded as right that he should occupy the chair, explain his position, beg to be relieved of the responsibility by having another appointed to fill his place, during the course of which proceedings he should act as chairman, until a successor has been voted into the seat of honour he desires to vacate.

The duties of the chairman are to maintain order in the meeting, preserve regularity in the proceedings, secure, as far as possible, attention and a fair hearing to the several speakers, see that no infringement of the purpose of the meeting take place, and observe that, with his sanction, and as a part of the proceedings of the assembly of which he has charge, no infraction of the law is allowed. He must give his undivided attention to the proceedings, neither himself interrupt or permit others to interrupt unduly the course of the meeting, or the speakers who are proposing, seconding, or supporting motions, or (allowed) amendments. For this purpose he should avoid private conversations with those who sit near him, and hold none but the most indispensable communications even with the secretary, if there is any, of the meeting, and give or permit as little as possible an occasion for the reminding cry of "Chair!

chair!" which indicates the sense of the meeting that the duties of the chair are being neglected, or its rights infringed. The chairman receives and puts motions, resolutions, amendments, &c., to the vote, seeks explanations of their intentions from speakers who do not clearly show whitherward their speechifying tends, and gives information upon any matter involved in the preceedings.

The maintenance of his position with firmness, authority, and calmness, in the midst of agitation, opposition of amendment to motion, the proposal of a direct negative on a resolution, of a postponement of the consideration of the motion, of a motion for the previous question, or for an adjournment of the meeting itself, is often a difficult task. It requires readiness of observation, tact, self-confidence, promptness of resources, and general clear-headedness, to keep the whole involved scheme of motion, counter-motion, amendment, and negative, resolution and suggestion, steadily in view, and to take up "the tangled skein" of affairs, wind the several threads up with order, decorum, and grace. Often disagreeable *contretemps* occur, and then he must be complaisant and unexacting. Sometimes intentional rudeness is offered, and then he should be urbane, yet dignified; little affected for his personal share, but jealous for the honour of the chair, and the good name of the meeting of which he has charge. Sometimes, when dilatory speakers miss the point, he must recall them to their proper task, and at other times some cunning speaker against time must be outwitted, or set down. It is not always easy to be good-tempered and gracious, self-possessed and sensible, in such circumstances, but a good chairman always is so.

In regard to questions of *order*, the ruling of the chairman, if concurred in by the meeting, is supreme and final. It may occur, however, that the chairman's view of the question may not be concurred in by the audience. In that case it is the duty of the chairman to explain, clearly and concisely, the reason for his ruling, but not to enter into debate on the question: if the meeting agrees, after the explanation has been given, with the view taken by the chairman, all is well; if it does not, two courses are open to the chairman,—either to yield gracefully, as the servant as well as the leader of the assembly, or courteously but peremptorily to resign his presidency. The chairman takes

his seat by the wish of the meeting, and to attain the ends of the meeting; if he cannot conform to the terms of his tenure, his tenure lapses, and he must yield his seat and functions to another.

This is indeed an extreme case, and can very rarely happen with a judicious as well as conscientious chairman. Every speaker is bound to accept the ruling of the chairman or appeal to the meeting, but he must not debate with the chairman on the question of order; if he has a fair case the meeting will indicate its wish that he should proceed, and unless his intention is in expressed violation of the terms of meeting few chairmen will refuse assent to the general wish of a meeting. Every appeal on the question of order is to be made first to the chairman. The question of order is not determinable at the mere option of the chairman, however, but by the expressed purpose of the meeting and the object of the speaker, who has exposed himself, or been exposed to the question. If the object of the speaker is to further the purpose of the meeting, the chairman may rule that he is in order, and that he has the chair, and yet the meeting may refuse to hear him. In such a case, after the chairman has used fair means to gain him a hearing, his responsibility ceases, and it becomes his duty to pronounce him out of order; for no one is in order who wilfully interferes with the progress of its business, or thrusts himself on an unwilling audience. It may also happen that the chairman may, looking to the purport of the meeting, declare a speaker to be out of order, and yet, from some incident in the meeting appearing to justify the speaker, the meeting may desire to hear what he has to say. In such a case the chairman may, by simply putting the question to the meeting,—Shall this person be heard? free himself from responsibility, and declare him then to be in order. This is an exercise for the chairman's discretion.

It is often a farther charge on the chairman of a meeting to authenticate by his signature a record of its acts, proceedings, resolutions, &c., and even sometimes to see that the determination of the meeting is fully and properly carried out, and to observe that the several officials, committees, &c., discharge the duties assigned to them in an efficient and orderly manner.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE GENERAL BUSINESS OF PUBLIC MEETINGS—MOTIONS, AMENDMENTS, ADJOURNMENTS, ETC.

EVERY substantive advocacy, every exercise of consultation, every public meeting got up for the reflective examination, discussion, or deliberate investigation of any topic, should result in an expression of opinion which the promoters of the meeting regard themselves as justified, upon the premises advanced, in placing before the public for their acceptance and aggregate approval. This is called a *motion.*

A motion is any proposal made to, or statement laid before a deliberative assembly, in order that by the recognition and acceptance of it by the members thereof, it may be declared to be a right and proper expression of their opinion or determination in regard to the matter deliberated upon. It gets this peculiar name because things as they stand in regard to any matter are figured to our minds as at rest or stationary. When we desire to change this state of things we employ some means by which the effecting of the change may be initiated; and this first force, intended to be productive of change in the state of things as they are, we call a *motion,* because it is designed to set things in motion towards change. Any motion made in a public meeting must be in accordance with the purpose for which the meeting has been brought together, in substantial harmony with the expressed intention of the promoters, and of the people who have come together at their invitation. It is the chairman's duty to see that this is the case, and that neither by oversight, misdirection, or error, is the defined object of the meeting defeated, set aside, or betrayed. If the motion errs in any way tending towards that, the chairman's duty is either to have it corrected or set aside; his chief—in fact, his entire duty being to effect the express purpose of the meeting over which he presides.

Any proposed motion, however, may fairly be met by *a counter-motion,* that is, by an *affirmation* of a directly contrary nature to that contained in the motion. As every motion must be an affirmative sentence, a passing of judgment regarding something, it is not unfrequently

difficult to find terms which will affirmatively put a direct negative on any motion. Yet as there are cases in which people may very properly desire that given questions should not be opened up, or wish that nothing definite should be done regarding them,—as circumstances may arise in which not only a given motion may be objectionable, but any motion whatever, or any step which would bring the topic into public debate—some means must be had by which the initiation of discussion may be objected to and argued against. One of the forms in which this may be done is by a counter-motion—a resolution declaratory of a principle subversive of that made in the motion. To the motion, *e.g.*, "That reform is necessary," the proper counter-motion would not be "That reform is unnecessary," but "That the present state of the electoral franchise is satisfactory." It is the duty of the chairman to reject a counter-motion if it is informal, but if formal it is his duty to put it to the meeting. This is generally done without discussion, and if successful, ends in breaking up the meeting.

If the motion seem, to any person in the meeting, to express an opinion to which he cannot consent, he is entitled to place before the assembly an opinion which he thinks will better suit the purpose of the meeting, and accord with the mind of the people convened. This is called an *amendment*.

An *amendment* is, as its name imports, designed to be, or at least is put forth as being, an improvement on the motion it is proposed to supplant by it. When it is desired to oppose, vary, qualify, or improve the motion which is put before a meeting, the most legitimate way of doing so is by bringing forward an amendment. An amendment, like a motion, should be in the affirmative; and as it professes to be an improvement of a motion, or purports to be a more acceptable form of a somewhat similar mode of attaining the same end as the motion, it must ostensibly, at least, bear towards the effecting of a similar purpose, and is, in general, as closely as may be and as far as can be managed, modelled upon the original motion. But if the mover of the amendment is of opinion that the original motion is not in agreement with the purpose of the meeting or conformable to the natural expectations of those who have been drawn to it, he may bring forward his amendment

fairly enough as one worthy to supersede the original motion, because more accordant with the original spirit of the promoters and the suggestions their announcements excited. Amendments may also be offered on the ground that they propose more effective measures for the accomplishment of the design of the meeting than the foregoing motion, or even than other amendments.

Amendments *may be* as numerous as the views capable of being taken of the question, though they are seldom made so. The duty of the chairman is to see that each speaker keeps to the business before the house, tables a proper and pertinent motion or amendment, as the case may be, and that each has been duly and fairly seconded (and supported, if allowance is given for that). He is afterwards bound to read, or cause to be read, the very words of each motion and amendment *seriatim*, announcing at the same time the movers and seconders of each, and then beginning with the last amendment, and going back to the motion, to put each severally, distinctly, and specially before the meeting—re-reading each as put—asking the members of the meeting in regard to each, as he goes along, to show, and, if need be, register, their votes for or against each separate thesis placed before them.

It does not at all follow that mere attendance at a public meeting commits, either individually or collectively, the persons attending it to the reception of any or all of the proposals put before them by the promoters or the speakers approved by them. There is a provision, therefore, made in several ways for defeating the purpose of the promoters of a meeting, when that is found to be likely to be carried out on a plan or by agencies not favourably looked on by the meeting. It may appear, for instance, that the subject is not sufficiently matured for distinct decision; or it may be that the motion made assumes some important and not sufficiently determined idea as proved or acceptable; or it may be found unadvisable on other accounts to proceed with the motion to a definite vote—to push the meeting, as it were, to a decision. That these difficulties may be escaped from, without altogether compromising the promoters or the cause in favour, a motion for the *postponement* of the consideration of the question may be made; and even this may be made to take such a form as may be

tantamount to the negation or the casting out of the motion against which it is brought,—at least, of its dismissal without further debate at that time, if ever again.

Time, patience, and temper, are all liable to exhaustion; and often the improbability of coming to a determination in the given state of a public meeting suggests that a continuation of the same is likely to end in a still greater waste of all three. In these circumstances a formal intermission of business may be proposed, and any one in the assembly may suggest the putting off of the consideration of the questions engaging attention till a future meeting on a day specified, or even without mention of a fixed day. This motion for an adjournment of a meeting, as it is called, may be appropriately used when the time occupied by a meeting has been unduly extended,—when the state of feeling in the meeting is too unsettled, excited, or agitated to give hope of a proper decision,—when business of importance calls any of the chief parties in the meeting elsewhere,—or when the business of the meeting is not ripe for taking action on it. Adjournment suspends, but does not annul proceedings; delays or defers—and thus sometimes altogether interrupts—the progress of the business set down for hearing or being attended to in the announcements of the meeting; or puts an end, for the time being, to some disagreeable form of advocacy or denunciation, which leads to the likelihood of worrying and wearying the audience or the members.

A motion for adjournment may be made at any stage of the proceedings of a public meeting; and unlike any other motion (or amendment), though once or oftener negatived, may be repeated again and again. It is true that a general moral obligation rests upon every one who frequents a meeting to avoid the hindrance or interruption of public business unnecessarily, for that involves others in consequences unforeseen by them, and therefore not taken into account when they determined to attend the meeting. Hence it is a recognised requirement of the etiquette of public meetings that the course of business should not be rashly, inconsiderately, or on slight occasion, diverted, hindered, or interrupted. But it is not an easy matter to arrange any definite rule for the restraining of a motion for adjournment without causing, on the one hand, more

inconvenience by the regulation than would be avoided by leaving it in the present state of unwritten freedom. On this account the motion for adjournment has been taken into the tactician's special service, and not unfrequently has been employed to gain ends which could not otherwise, in the circumstances and at the time, have been accomplished. As there is, however, a certain degree of odium attached to any one who trifles with the time, interests, and wishes of others without very sufficient cause, and a great dislike is evinced towards any one who interrupts the proceedings of a meeting in opposition to what may be called the general sense of the audience, the liberty of moving an adjournment as frequently as any one pleases is seldom abused though occasionally used. As a small set-off and check to this unlimited repetition of motions for adjournment, it has been found advisable to lay upon the person who is successful in carrying such a motion, the duty of opening the business after the recess; and this responsibility somewhat weighs with those who might otherwise use injudiciously the motion, left so unrestricted as it is, for other purposes in accordance with the general convenience. This duty, of course, devolves upon the person who resumes the adjourned business—the necessity of showing cause for his motion, by bringing forward new grounds for consideration, and fresh reasons for desiring to extend the time for due debate or deliberation; and assumes, of course, that unless he had had these, he would not have used the privilege such a vote put within his reach.

It sometimes happens that in the course of debate suggestions are thrown out and put in the form of substantive motions, which, though neither in themselves irrelevant to the matter in question or unsuitable as mere considerations or suggestions at the moment, may yet be seen to be unwise or useless, or untimely in their incidence upon other things involved in the deliberations; and these motions often are of such a nature as indirectly to lead the discussion into devious ways and trackless paths, while they possess such a feasible relevancy as makes it injudicious for the chairman to prohibit discussion if the motion is allowed, or to reject the motion itself on the ground of its real divergence from the questions under

consideration. Such motions may require assent to commonplace and undeniable propositions of such generality as to be fruitless in practical results,—they may merely have a side effect on the debate,—they may be intended purposely to lead away from the real pith of the discussion, they may be absurd in the circumstances, nonsensical in the place they propose to hold in the debate, or incomprehensible in their incidence on the particular matter before the house,—or they may be proposed by some prosy, dreamy, but well-meaning, though, for the time being, disagreeable person. To elude discussion on such themes or on such terms, and yet to avoid the appearance of anything personally ungracious, a means has been provided in "moving the previous question." This puts a negative upon the motion proposed, and calls upon the meeting to revert to the former topic of debate—to get back again to the highway of discussion, from which for a moment it had been turned aside by the proposals thus sought to be got rid of. The ultimate motion to which one can revert is that which may be supposed to be made prior to any meeting whatever, viz., "That things shall stand as they are;" so that there is always a "previous question," either real or implied, upon which the meeting can fall back should the motion be carried. In general, however, when the "previous question" is gained, people very seldom seek far back for it; it has served the purpose for which it was contrived, the shelving, without debate, some matters preliminary, collateral, or implied in other resolutions, which it would be inconvenient, impolitic, or unwise to discuss there and then in the state of the meeting at which they were proposed.

In moving "the previous question" in order to set aside, in a regular and business-like manner, some question considered to be useless or unworthy of discussion, special care should in general be paid to observe the formal proprieties of procedure. The motion against which it is to be used should be duly moved and seconded—for until that is done the obstruction to the progress of business has no real existence, no tangible vitality; when it has been properly put before the meeting by the chairman, "the previous question" is in order; before that, it is premature and uncalled for. This, like—nay, with even greater scrupulousness

than—all other formal proceedings, should be kept in its right place and used with all decorum. If this is not attended to, the motion acquires too much the appearance of a contemptuous "cut direct;" while its special purpose is to give the motion the go-by, and yet conserve the civilities of discussion, preserve the harmony of the meeting, and keep up the graces of social intercourse, against breaches of which these forms are expressly made and arranged.

It is the chairman's duty, with suavity and without undue haste, to put the motion for "the previous question" first, and this, if carried, annuls and sets aside the motion against which it was levelled. While making a motion or moving an amendment, the person so doing is said to be in possession of the chair, and therefore to have a right to a fair hearing of his motion or amendment in due sequence; but the mere intention to move a resolution does not involve the right of making a speech on the main question. A public meeting, as a voluntary congregation, has a supreme right to decide upon whom it shall listen to in advocacy of any opinion, and to refuse a hearing to whomsoever it will. Net, precise, referrible advice or suggestion, as a deliberative assembly it has a duty to itself to fulfil by receiving; but the enforcement or importunate pressure of any specific view at the party's own instance and accord, without the concurrence of the public, or in opposition to their option, is indefensible. The chairman has fulfilled his duty if he bespeaks a hearing for the reading of the motion, and it is at the discretion of the meeting whether they will listen farther, or reject all overtures in behalf of an extension of the time and patience allotted to the given person. The unmistakable vote of the people in public meeting assembled is the supreme law, and the chairman is the executer of the will of the people thus announced to him. He should submit to no usurpation where he is governor-in-chief.

It is not to be supposed that these rules can never be abused and may never be neglected, but it may be affirmed that any neglect or abuse of them will be found, in the long run, to involve a far larger amount of ill-feeling and inconvenience than the most rigid adherence to their spirit and intent. The observance of them has been found to be

salutary in the experience of the most exciting times. They form at once the safeguard of the public and those who seek to move them. The peevish and violent may chafe when they operate against their desire, but so long as the greatest good of the greatest numbers is sought by the rules of social intercourse, rebellion is not only unseasonable but unwise,—is even a greater blunder than it is a crime.

On the disposal by the meeting of all the motions and amendments before it, or on the carrying of a motion for adjournment, or for "the previous question," * the chairman ought at once to declare the meeting dissolved, and to leave the chair. If a motion of thanks to him be proposed, he may return to it, and there reply to the compliments passed on his conduct, but no further business should thereafter be entertained or allowed.

The chairman, as the chosen executive official in the meeting, alone possesses the power or the right to enforce order. He should strictly insist on that, and resist the intrusion of any one on his rights. This right he may carry to the length of expulsion. Should the meeting persistently refuse or fail to "support the chair;" or should he feel that he holds and is bound to opinions opposed to those insisted on by the meeting, it is the chairman's duty, after explanation, to retire, in the manner and with the formalities explained on page 37 *ante*.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SPEAKERS; THEIR RIGHTS AND THEIR DUTIES.

PUBLIC meetings are, of course, called for the despatch of business. They are neither primarily nor ostensibly called for the gratification of the egotism of one individual or many individuals, nor for the mere pleasure of the parties attending at the time. They have a fixed, announced purpose. Towards the effecting of that purpose (or the thwart-

* The order of things as they are is, of course, understood to be affirmed, by its very existence, to be right—"whatever is, is right"—prior to and pending any discussion. If it is thought inexpedient, impolitic, unadvisable, or absurd to consider any motion or amendment brought forward, or if it is desirable to close a discussion without any

ing of it, if it is thought better to thwart it) all the proceedings should tend. To listen to eloquence, merely because it is eloquence, is *beside* the purpose. It is not, therefore, right in any speaker—unless that be distinctly agreed on—to monopolize the whole time of the meeting, or to arrogate to himself the lead of a meeting, or to eke out the stunted measure of his thoughts by irrelevancies, or to speak in time or purport beyond the necessities of the case, —in short, it is not right merely to *make* speeches.

Every person in a public meeting has the right of speech upon the object of the meeting implied in his invitation to it, though few may choose, or be ready, to avail themselves of it. Each is, therefore, only one of many possible speakers having equal rights with himself. It is his duty to address himself strictly to the topic on hand—to argue upon it, or to persuade or dissuade regarding it.

Each speaker has a right to courtesy, encouragement, and attention, in so far as he attends to the requirements of the public, viz., despatch of business, truth, order, and justice. Each speaker is entitled to be heard in turn, as his claim has been advanced—subject only to the *veto* of the meeting, of whose voice the chairman is the authorized exponent. If they express dislike of him, or preference for another, he must yield, although he may protest.

It is the duty of each speaker to be considerate of the public's time, patience, and comfort; to attend exclusively to the business of the assembly; to be attentive to the chairman, courteous to the audience, and to abstain from offering personalities towards opponents; to submit to the order of business, and to yield, at once, to the expressed will of the meeting.

A speaker is only entitled to address the meeting once—until all other intending speakers are heard—except upon a point of order, in explanation, or, after all others, in reply. In neither of these cases has he permission to import new matter into his advocacy, to originate any new *tactique*, or

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clearly determinate decision upon the matter, it is usual "to move the previous question," which is equivalent to avoiding or relinquishing the debate of the subject before the meeting. The adjourment of a meeting is equal to a motion to delay consideration. It may either be moved till a fixed time and place, or without a fixed date or place—*sine die aut loco*. These motions are not debatable.

to reopen the question upon any point not previously touched. He may explain a phrase, or reply to an objection, but he must enter upon no fresh train of argument or restatement of the question. Whatever he has to say must be said in brief, pertinent, and attractive terms, on the occurrence of his turn to address the audience. Forethought, and not afterthought, therefore, ought to engage the speaker's mind. The impression he wishes to make must be made at the first stroke of active speech, for no dependence can be put upon an afterpiece.

A very important point in the etiquette of public meetings is the condition upon which a speaker in possession of the chair, *i. e.*, engaged in addressing the house, can be interrupted. The chairman, of course, can interrupt a speaker on any reasonable ground, as, for example, to ask him politely to what his speech tends, to come to the point, &c.; to call him to order on any breach of propriety being committed by him; to indicate the wish of the meeting to him, or to request any explanation which seems material to the complete apprehension of a speaker's aim. If this is done graciously, not captiously, no fault can be found, and such interruptions are neither offensive to the speaker nor disagreeable to the audience. If the chairman, through ungracious dissent, impatience, or other form of partiality, make use of his position to annoy and "put out" a speaker, as it is called, he is amenable to censure, and ought to suffer rebuke. While a meeting allows no tampering with his authority, he ought to be equally jealous over himself, that no signs of favour or disregard shall be shown by him to the detriment of any other, or the injury of the interests of the meeting. Can any other person than the chairman rightfully interrupt a speaker? Undoubtedly. The speaker is bound to forward the design of the meeting. If he employ lengthy effort to establish a commonplace remote from the point, if he digress widely from the matter under consideration, if he is unnecessarily occupying time, and so impeding progress, by enforcing it may be an admitted point; if by tediousness, or any other cause, he is endangering the carrying out of the design of the meeting, or perverting it from its fixed purpose, it is open to any member of the meeting "to rise to order," and to call the attention of the chairman to the fact; if he make any misstatement,

misconstrue any former speaker, use language offensive in its nature or for its personality, it is the duty of those who observe the offence to protest against its being passed over; or if he introduce considerations which cannot be held to be proved, which refer to facts of which the meeting has no knowledge, or no right to interfere with, a point of order may be legitimately raised by any person present.

Of course, if any one does so maliciously, captiously, annoyingly, uselessly, or improperly, he lays himself open to animadversion and censure by the meeting—they will not probably be long of administering due condemnation. When a point of order is raised, it ought to be stated briefly, courteously, and without argument to the chairman. The speaker ought at once to stop until the point has been stated. So soon as the point of order is stated, the chairman should be prepared with his decision, which, when given, is final, if concurred in by the meeting. If, however, it is a debatable point, the opinion of others may be offered to and be accepted by the chairman. In any observation on a point of order, the general question must be left wholly untouched, and the utmost conciseness should be enforced. The speaker ought once to explain, if he desires it, why he thinks he is in order; and if debate is allowed he should be permitted to reply; but after a decision has been given he should have no resource but to abandon the point, and to apologize for his offence.

One other point may merit a moment's notice, viz., in what order should speakers address a meeting. If the promoters have made arrangements for the proposal of such resolutions as are intended to be submitted to the meeting, the proposer and seconder thus arranged for have the chair and prior right of speech in the order provided. But it is competent to any one in the meeting to propose an amendment on any resolution offered for the acceptance of the meeting. Hence there ensues the right of individuals in the meeting to address the audience. This right may be claimed by several persons at once. When such an exigency occurs, the chairman should indicate the person who first caught his eye, and this indication of priority gives the right of address, in the first instance, to that person, unless the meeting indicate a greater desire to listen to another—in which case it is usual to defer to the mind of the meeting; for there is little chance of affecting favourably a

meeting unwillingly listening to an unwelcome adviser. After him, the second, third, &c., if they desire it and the meeting concurs, are then respectively in place. Should the chairman, in name of the meeting, request any gentleman to give his aid in the determination or elucidation of any question, it is generally expected that he shall readily comply, and make such communication as is required.

The *manner* of speaking advisable at different sorts of meetings is considered in Chapter XIII.

CHAPTER X.

THE ORDER AND LAWS OF BUSINESS.

THE forms of business pursued at public meetings are more or less based or modelled on the methods of procedure adopted and practised by the Commons House of Parliament—the highest type of public meeting in the country. It is a deliberative and representative assembly, and almost every possible form of public meeting performs more or less these conjunct offices—deliberating on some matter of interest, and representing some portion of the public voice in the results of that deliberation. A knowledge of the usages established by common consent and concurrent practice in those congregations of the people in which their judgment is solicited, or in which they are asked to examine and canvass some opinion, project, theory, or event, is very commonly thought to be difficult, if not almost impossible of attainment. It requires a large amount of practical education to enable any one rightly to comprehend the whole theory, and to act upon or maintain the correct practice of the procedure of public meetings. These are not unfrequently regarded as a series of intricate, ill-defined conventionalities, which may be adhered to or dispensed with according to the likes or dislikes, the wishes or the conveniences, of those who take the lead at them, or form the majority in them. This is very far from being the case. Experience has discovered pretty accurately now the best means of securing order, effectiveness, and fair play at public meetings; and though there is, doubtless, great reliance to be put in the discretion of chairmen, speakers, committees, and audiences, and much latitude allowed to the exercise of that discretion in particular points and in regard to special

7936

incidents, yet the value of fixed forms and settled methods of procedure is felt to give them peculiar claims to attention. Every public man—every man, in fact, who cares for having a voice in the management of affairs in general,—in any department whatever,—ought to become acquainted with the rights and duties of the chairman or president of a meeting, the more usual laws of address and of debate, the form of putting questions to the vote in due order and with a proper regard to the rights of individuals and of the public. Familiarity with the forms of deliberation and debate, if commonly spread among all classes of the community, would tend greatly to the preservation of order and decorum in public assemblies, and would constitute most effective safeguards against the tyranny of dogmatic chairmen, and of the rights of the minority in any convocation.

A fixed purpose is presupposed in every meeting. The first duty is to constitute the meeting. That is formally done by the election of a chairman. The meeting is opened by him. He reads the announcement, and indicates the purpose of the meeting. He introduces the several speakers as their claims give right. Every speech must either relate to a motion made or to be made, or to an amendment proposed or about to be proposed. Every motion must be in real and verbal harmony with the purpose of the meeting. (Indeed, the desirable motions, as they think, are in general prepared beforehand by the promoters of the meeting, and arrangements made for their advocacy.) It must also be in the form of an affirmation; for people meet to make affirmations, not to exhaust all possible negatives on the matter before them. When this motion has been written out and handed to the chairman, signed by the mover, and has been properly seconded and endorsed by the person who does so, the chairman ought to read, or get read, the original motion, and before putting it to the vote, pause to allow of the appearance of any dissentient who may be desirous of moving an amendment, which also must be couched in the affirmative form. If any amendment or amendments be offered and seconded, it or they are to be handed to the chairman, in writing, signed and endorsed as was the original motion, and each should be read to the meeting as it was written and handed up. (Sometimes the formality of writing is not insisted on.)

In taking the votes, the proper order of business is to commence with the amendment last made, and having had it properly read in the hearing of the assembly, to take the votes distinctly, in definite "ayes" and "noes" respectively, on it;—then to pass on to the previously made ones, in reverse order, till the original motion is reached,—taking the votes regarding each in the same way. The most convenient way of taking the votes is by a show of hands. When the majority is palpable to any eye, the hands are never counted. When the appearance indicates a near parity, the chairman should either count them himself, as visibly and audibly as possible, or, with the approval of the meeting, appoint tellers. The most expedient way of appointing tellers is, in general, to nominate to that duty the mover of the amendment for the "ayes," and of the previous amendment or the original motion for the "noes." Sometimes the respective seconders are put on as checks to their principals, the seconder of the motion checking off the "ayes" for the amendment, and *vice versa*. The votes may also be taken by the audience crossing the room to separate sides for "aye" and "no" respectively, or by audible reply on the calling of a roll,—indeed, in any way that affords a true and satisfactory gauge and test of the opinion of those present.

As soon as one motion and its incidental amendments, if any, have been regularly and thoroughly disposed of, another should be proceeded with if requisite or advisable. No subsequent motion or amendment ought to be put by the chairman of a meeting which contradicts or implies a contradiction nominally or really of the motion or amendment previously adopted, for that would be tantamount to the stultifying of the whole proceedings,—would be, in fact, to ask the meeting formally to record its disagreement with that to which it had already agreed. The same procedure is to be adopted with each motion and its amendments, as was advised for the first. Immediately upon the pronouncing of the dismissal of the meeting, some person —usually agreed upon beforehand—ought to propose a vote of thanks to the chairman "for his conduct in the chair." It is not essential that this vote should be concurred in by the meeting, which has a perfect right to record its disapprobation or censure of the chairman by withholding the

vote asked. Silence will tell with emphasis that the meeting is dissatisfied with his share in the proceedings. If approved of, the chairman is entitled to return thanks in the briefest possible terms.

Outline of the general order of business:—

I. *Election of chairman*, &c.—unless some public functionary, mayor, sheriff, president, vice-president, is present, or the name of chairman has been announced on calling the meeting.—*and constitution of the meeting.*

II. Reading of the announcement by which the meeting has been called—which defines its nature and determines its conditions.

III. 1. Statement of object of meeting, either by chairman or by some one—often the secretary—with his sanction. 2. Reading of minutes of former meeting, if any. These ought to be duly authenticated by the chairman's signature.

IV. 1. Address, lecture, speech, &c. 2. Moving and seconding of resolutions, sometimes supported by main speaker of the evening. 3. Receiving amendments proposed after each resolution. 4. Taking the vote on each resolution, and, if amendment has been proposed, on that previous to the resolution. 5. Engrossing resolutions by secretary, and signature by chairman. 6. Reading minutes by secretary. 7. Remarks or amendments proposed on minutes as read.

V. Chairman's closing remarks, and dismissal of meeting.

VI. Formal and complimentary votes, viz.—1. Chairman. 2. Promoters. 3. Advocates, &c.

CHAPTER XI.

ON THE RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF THE AUDIENCE AT PUBLIC MEETINGS.

THE public have a right to timely, explicit, straightforward, and sufficiently widely circulated information regarding any intended meeting—to fair and impartial admission, on the terms and at the time specified, to the meeting, till the place is fully occupied, and packing a meeting is in no case justifiable; for then it is holding a meeting under

false pretences. If any specific *set* is wanted to attend, that ought to be honestly announced, and not manœuvringly managed. The public have also the right—unless otherwise arranged—to choose a chairman; to insist upon courtesy and fair play from him and to him; to make their voice and will heard upon the matter under consideration, whether it is accordant with or discordant from the views of the promoters; to give an attentive hearing to, and to demand respectful address from, each several speaker who keeps to the point, and "has anything to say" tending towards the elucidation of the question. It is, however, neither bound to listen to bores, egotists, dreamers, or schemers. It is often unnecessary for it to submit to addresses from known partisans—especially if there are others ready to be heard. They have the right, too, of voting, and of seeing that the votes are honestly and correctly taken. It is the duty of the public to attend. Every public meeting is, in reality, representative. It is a gauge and test of the interest, intelligence, and opinion of the locality in which it is held. Indifference to any vital interest of the body corporate indicates degradation and selfishness. Yet zealous partisans, by dexterous manœuvring, make this very indifference act more effectively in promoting their own designs than people imagine. Every public meeting is also a culture. It affords opportunities for thought and action, with the responsibilities of action. It is never right in the public to receive passively the thoughts of some one else; it is their duty to exercise their own judgment. Effective thinking cannot be done by proxy. Every member of a public meeting ought to regard himself as in some measure acting for the public interest, and, therefore, in the truest sense a representative. As a representative, he is bound to be honest and just. Public meetings, as means of nourishing public spirit, developing general intelligence, accustoming men to think as men responsible for their thoughts, and their results, deserve more attention than is usually given to them. If, at each, men would perform their duties and maintain their rights, they would receive a beneficial mental discipline, and learn to govern themselves; acquire facility in conducting public business, and prepare themselves for taking part in other and more important public duties and offices.

We have, of course, spoken in this book of public meetings properly so called; *i. e.*, as hereinbefore defined. There are many so-called public meetings which are entire misnomers. Such meetings may be open to the public, but they have not a public object in view, nor are the public allowed to share in the proceedings. Meetings of electors favourable to some special candidate, of parliamentary or municipal voters pledged to one interest, of promoters of class views, or of social or civic propagandists of any sort; meetings of sections of the religious world, ostensibly open to all, yet well known to be managed, manœuvred, and sure to be packed; meetings of a locally agitating nature, open like a net to catch the unwary, and implicate them in the schemes of the stirrers up of strifes, and many others of a similar sort. We do not, of course, here speak of meetings of social, civic, religious, or local reformers, who clearly state their object and define their views, inviting the public to consider them; nor of meettings of sects, parties, institutions, associations, societies, unions, clubs, &c., who ask the public to listen to their schemes and themes—for these, by their express form, cease to be included in public meetings properly so called. Yet a very large proportion of the rules laid down regarding assemblies open to the whole body of the people, to become art and part in the carrying on of the business, and to share in its consideration and success, is applicable also to those smaller sections of the public to whom invitations may be given. In all, the order and laws of business are alike; in many, the forms for the election of a chairman, and the method of performing his duties, are similar; in some, the speakers and the public are allowed a somewhat similar latitude. And, indeed, the more nearly they resemble in constitution and course of procedure the public meeting proper, the more likely are they to commend themselves to the common sense and acceptance of the public. In all, the prime requisites are justice, order, good faith, despatch of business, free discussion, and effective results.

The right of the public to approve or disapprove of the proceedings at any meeting to which invitation is given, is of such importance as to require separate treatment. This is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER XII.

APPROBATION OR MARKS OF DISAPPROBATION AT AND DISTURBANCE OF PUBLIC MEETINGS.

IMMEMORIAL usage has transformed into a sort of prescriptive right, "more powerful than either law or reason," the privilege accorded to attenders of public meetings to express their sympathy with the object of the meeting, and their approbation of or their dissent from the proceedings taken or speeches delivered at any assemblage of that sort by audible signs and visible tokens. As signs of approbation we have the waving of hats, handkerchiefs, &c., clapping of hands, tramping of feet, or the judicious use of a stick, umbrella, &c., on the floor, and the employment of the interjectional phrases of acquiescence. As marks of disapprobation we have a mute reception in dead silence, hissing, shuffling of the feet, coughing, groaning, laughing, and the production of discordant noises which may either be interjectional phrases of dislike, whistling, or the imitation of the cries of different sorts of animals—the lowing of oxen, the bleating of sheep, the howling of dogs, the braying of asses, the crowing of cocks, &c. All these signs too have their separate uses and significations; have come to have a definite expressiveness; and to indicate to a practised speaker's ear the precise state of feeling prevalent in his audience or in such parts of it as give forth these signs. Of these it is quite requisite that a public speaker should have a thorough knowledge, and of the special uses of each the frequenter of public meetings should have himself well informed, lest he should mistime his expression or mistake his purposed end. To get hold of a proper acquaintance with the significations requires considerable observativeness, wide experience, sympathetic susceptibilities, and an aptitude for taking in the whole of the sensations which a public meeting furnishes from the occupation of a perch in a gallery corner, or a window nook to that of a chairman's seat, or the standing space of the mover or seconder of a resolution. Every one knows the actuality of such expressions of feeling in public meetings, and most people have aided more or less intelligently in such demon-

strations of applause or dissent. But few can have failed to observe that sometimes a mistimed or mistaken use of either has jarred on the sense of the meeting and received condign and immediate reprehension. We may accept it as a fact, then, that the expression of approbation or disapprobation by signs and sounds forms one of the use and wont rights and privileges of the British citizen.

As each person in a public meeting cannot have an opportunity of speaking, the use of conventional signs to indicate approval or disapproval is advantageous, not only to the speaker, but also to the public. It suggests to the former how far he has carried the meeting along with him, how successfully he is stemming the current against him, or how helplessly he is labouring to convince or change the sentiments of his hearers; while to the latter it gives a means of calculating the comparative strength and energy of the accord or discord upon the matter under consideration. It affords to the speaker's enthusiasm a natural stimulant and encouragement when his audience expresses its approbation of his sentiments and opinions, and it aids him in rising to those higher flights of eloquence to which a consentaneous activity of emotions between himself and the meeting, not only give occasion, but impart half of their charm; or, if disapprobation be expressed, it excites in him those strong feelings of self-respect and antagonism to others which lend force to irony, weight to invective, and might to denunciation. To the public it is at once a vent to enthusiasm, and a protection against dulness, folly, or self-assurance; a help to the determination of the proportion of sympathy a speaker commands, and a means of dissent from any opinion not in harmony with the cause advocated, or the thoughts of the public addressed. The aim of eloquence is to excite emotion, to rouse passion, to effect persuasion; all strong emotion, vivid passion, thorough persuasion tends to manifest itself. Those hundreds or thousands upon whom the orator has been plying his arts, however willing, and even able, to form an opinion on public topics, are either unable or unwilling to express in set terms the grounds of their decisions upon questions, but when they hear an argument of superior force a sentiment of incisive effectiveness, or a fresh view of the duty of determining as they have done, or are inclined to do, they can affirm their

concurrence in cheers, in applause, in shouts of "hear, hear!" "bravo!" &c.; while, if they find the advocacy of the opinions they are disposed to entertain put upon what they regard as an erroneous basis, or perceive that the opinions expressed are alien from those to which they incline, they can protest against either by direct hissing, by ironical cheers, or by the more forcible if less elegant way of groaning and laughter; while if the sentiments expressed are a mere repetition, or weak and unsatisfactory statement of arguments with which they are already familiar, or any one is seeking to convince them after they are convinced, the public can indicate their unwillingness to hear farther talk, at the same time that they show their concurrence in the views enunciated by gently or ungently "ruffing," as it is called, "the speaker down." These are great conventional conveniences, we might almost term them constitutional privileges, as distinctly the right of the public in public meeting assembled, as the right to meet at all is; for any meeting in which assent or dissent was not indicatable would lack one of its chief elements of interest, viz., that it is an agency for the expression of public opinion. Those speakers, therefore, who dislike applause, and dread disapprobation, dislike and dread the exercise of the rights of others—rights as valuable and useful to them as the right of public speech is to those who address them; and the public who does not exercise these advantages when in their power, forfeit privileges which are as fixed by usage and custom as the right of meeting. They are protective rights, essentially requisite in assemblies where diverse opinions may be uttered, and differing resolutions may be offered, where political or polemical topics are discussed. They enable the public to resist the tyranny of speakers, to insist upon having what they want done, and to hinder in part at least what they do not want from being done, as well as show when anything is said with which they disagree. Signs of approbation or disapprobation are social conventional symbols, the results of experience compressed and condensed to the utmost, by which the voice of the people may make itself heard without the formality of speechifying.

We shall jot down a remark or two on the different signs —1, of approbation; 2, of disapprobation; and then give an idea of the general principle which should regulate their exercise in public assemblies.

I.—*Signs of Approbation.*

1. *Applause on entrance* by cheers or other approbatory sounds, is regarded as indicating (1) sympathy with the cause of meeting; (2) fealty to the promoters of it; (3) favour for the advocates of that cause; (4) acceptance of the form in which the meeting has been called. Such applause may vary from a merely civil greeting of welcome to an ovation, and may either merely intimate the tolerance of the audience, or rise to a demonstration of enthusiastic unity of opinion with the promoters of the meeting and the cause they have at heart. This is known by the earnestness, frequency, and repeated intensity of the applause, its generalness, or universality, and its absorbing or drowning any signs, if any is offered, of dissent or disapproval. It is the form established by convention to fix and notify to the leaders in the movement the position they occupy in the sympathy and esteem of the audience; and it generally gives the "tone" to the preliminary proceedings taken at the meeting.

2. *Cheers* or *applause* in the *course* of a speech are generally understood to signify approval of the sentiment or of the line of argument followed by the speaker; at the *close* of a speech admiration of the whole address. Applause at the close of the reading of a motion, amendment, &c., signifies agreement with its spirit and assent, if the applause is general, that it should be regarded as accordant with the "mind of the meeting." Cheers or applause on the appearance of any one as a speaker is understood to indicate that the audience is willing to listen to him; and the intensity of the applause marks the depth of the feeling in his favour —which may vary from merely acquiescent tolerance to the height of enthusiasm.

3. *Cries* such as "Hear, hear," "bravo," &c., are regarded as indicative of enforcive assent to the speech delivered, to mark out that as worthy of remark and attention; the former shout, however, indicates rather approval of the sentiment, while the latter is more suggestive of approval of the person. "Go on" is an encouragement to proceed or a leave-giving to commence after a dispute has arisen. "Go it again" is a vulgarism expressive of the delight taken by the person who uses it in some vituperative language

which is being employed—a sympathy generally with ill-temper and invective.

"Chair, chair," as an approbatory cry, testifies to the sympathy of the meeting—or, at least, of such portion thereof as makes use of the terms—with the president's view of the matter, a desire to uphold the chairman in the exercise of his authority, and to put down intrusion, disaffection, or disobedience, or an intimation that due respect and submission has not been given to the chairman, but will be enforced by the meeting. When a person is called by name it is usually understood to signify a wish on the part of the meeting to hear his voice on the matter.

4. Waving of handkerchiefs, sticks, hats, &c., is demonstrative of thorough fellow-feeling with, approval of, and affection for the person towards whom it is used; entire sympathy with the cause or sentiment expressed; enthusiastic excitement and joy felt at the success gained or at the determination displayed to prosecute the cause to a triumph.

II.—*Signs of Disapprobation.*

1. The cry of "chair, chair," in a disapproving tone, is a sign of dissatisfaction with the president of the meeting in regard to his conduct, and a call to him to give greater attention and have more respect for the audience, its time, patience, temper and designs, than to allow the business to suffer by his disregard. When "order, order" is called by the meeting it is a token of its disapproval of some act or speech which infringes on the rights of others, is disrespectful, or is alien from the purpose of the meeting, or in some way offensive to the audience. "Hear, hear," may be said ironically, and may thus be made, according to its tone, equivalent to distrust, doubt, and denial of, or disagreement with the statements of the speaker. It may even sometimes rise to defiance and express contradiction. "Leave off," "sit down," "shut up," &c., are phrases which sufficiently explain themselves.

The general principle which should regulate the expression of approbation and of disapprobation is that of justice, not inclination. Every meeting is, or at least should be, called for a definite purpose, and with a fixed and predetermined design. It is therefore presumed that those

who attend meet together for the furtherance, and not for the frustration of that object. Everything which is legitimately and intentionally done to favour and forward that object ought to be approved; whatever unintentionally retards or thoughtlessly impedes progress towards that end should be borne with mildness, until objection is made or taken, and treated with forbearance, until a dutiful representation has been made of the evil caused by the course taken. Here gentle disapprobation may serve to call the chairman's attention to the fact, and if the speaker's good sense is not enough to make him see his error the chairman may object to his continuing in that course. Should he endeavour to resist these hints and persist in his course against the wish of the meeting expressed through the chairman, nothing remains but to put the offender down; for then he becomes intentionally offensive, and we have all a right to disapprove of those who act offensively towards us with intent.

"Oh! oh!" is an interjectional phrase which possesses a wide range of meaning according to the inflection of voice with which it is delivered. It may indicate mere startlement or surprise, dissatisfaction, doubt, contempt, or derision. It may be levelled at either the speaker, his statements, his facts, or his sentiments, and in either case may proceed from a tone of gentle remonstrance to what might almost be called a howl of execration, or a groan of indignation.

2. *Hissing* is the most distinct form of disapprobation. It expresses either dislike of the person, disapproval of his conduct, disinclination to listen to him, or disregard for his wishes, feelings, or designs; a contempt for his opinions, acts, or conduct, a disavowal of his sentiments, and an opposition to his proposals; or a determination to put down any attempt or endeavour to break through, disturb, or endanger the harmony and order of the proceedings of a meeting. It may vary in depth and intensity from simple annoyance to the expression of scorn.

3. Whistling, hooting, groaning, lowing, cock-crowing, braying, barking, mewing, horse-laughing, shuffling with the feet, bellowing, &c., are more vulgar forms of expressing annoyance, dislike, disapproval, and disregard. They are only justifiably used in extreme cases, when signal insolence or disregard of the social proprieties has been displayed.

This same principle supplies us with the grounds for judging of what may be regarded as a disturbance of a public meeting. Taking it as axiomatic that every public meeting is, or should be, convened for a special purpose and with a special intent; regarding it as the duty of the promoters of each meeting to make due and efficient general announcement of that purpose, and accepting the plain inference from these two requirements that those who attend any meeting, so called or convened, accept of the terms of announcement, any person (or persons) who enters such a meeting with the intention of diverting that meeting from its publicly avowed aim; or who uses any means to pervert the course of that meeting from the end ostensibly stated, acts unjustly and dishonestly—is either a traitor if he is among the promoters and their allies or agents, or an intruder if he attempts to wrest by force or fraud—any species of manœuvring in short—the meeting from its announced design. There may be difference of opinion honestly held regarding how the end proposed may be best accomplished, and such difference may be justifiably expressed and insisted upon by any member of the assembly—provided the meeting elects to hear him and declares him in order. But if any person or number of persons, knowing the conditions of meeting, makes efforts to defeat "the purposed end," they are disturbers of the meeting, and may be rightfully expelled. The end announced is a foregone conclusion, it is for the achievement of that end, and not its defeat, that the meeting is convened, and each person by attending that meeting becomes tacitly yet assuredly bound, if not to aid in the accomplishment of it, at least neither to hinder nor oppose it. If the intent of the meeting is dubious, it is quite in order to take steps to have that definitely declared, and to challenge the promoters to make their position intelligible. In such a case controversy may arise on the prime principle of the meeting, and such a motion may be put as shall cause a declaration thereof to be made in perfect order. When this is declared and accepted, it becomes the condition of the meeting, and all who take part in the proceedings are bound to endeavour to farther that end as far as lies in their power. Deliberation can only be effective when directed towards some defined results.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE STYLE OF SPEAKING SUITABLE TO PUBLIC MEETINGS,

i.e., The Eloquence of the Platform, the Hustings, the Vestry, and the Lecture-room.

Introduction.—the Nature and Purpose of Public Speaking.

THOUGHT is a living power. Eloquence is thought, not embodied merely, but vitalized; it not only diffuses but transfuses thought. *This* is the one prime distinction of genuine eloquence, its possession of a transferring (*i.e.*, an outgoing and an ingetting) energy. It is thought, so arranged and uttered as to be readily, really, influentially inserted into the minds of others. The ideas of the orator are not only quickened, they are also quickening. A speech is uttered with the intention that the very feeling and thought with which the orator tingles should pass out of his own mind into the respective but various minds of his hearers, and not merely communicate to them, but excite in them, the emotions and ideas which prompt him to the delivery of his discourse. The will is the life and power of eloquence. It gives fervency, ardour, and glow to the expression. It issues the laws to which logic and grammar, style and tone, look and gesture, speaker and hearer, must alike become subordinated. It is "the shaping spirit" of all-convincing and persuading thought. Will is the very heart's core of intention. Will is the inner essence of earnestness; and without an earnest intention to move, to overcome, to excite, and to guide, speech is successless and eloquence futile, indeed spurious. Eloquence, to energize, fuse, assimilate, and transform a concourse of various and individual minds, and bind them with the resistless spell of the speaker's purpose, must be possessed of all the pliancy and force of vigorous life, must be at once apt and earnest. It must fill, pervade, and penetrate, not the understanding only, but also the emotive nature and the will of the hearers. This is the rigid and necessary law of its manifestation. This arbitrary force—the will,—this autocrat of the mind, this determining power standing in the innermost recesses of the mind, wields the sceptre of authority

over choice of words, collocations of terms, forms of sentences, turns of expression, rhythm, paragraphs, relation of part to whole, collation of thought, matter of argument, logical continuity, manner of address, tone, gesture, and emphasis—the whole sweep of the mind's collected efforts,—and these it makes submissive to the purpose which quivers within; so that from the very initial act to the consummated fact the whole of an oration palpitates and heaves, pulsates and lives, by the impassioned energy of the dominant volition of the orator. Then only does the orator make a hit. To hit rightly, one must aim carefully. To succeed well, one must plan to good purpose. Eloquence is an impulse issuing from the centre of the soul to touch the inner springs of another's being, that it may produce therein a consenting activity and a fellow-sympathy with the speaker. However difficult it may be to trace the subtle and elusive influences of the will in oratorical masterpieces, we may rest assured they have been operative throughout their whole extent and intent. It is an argument palpable to the grossest of human minds that an *address* is delivered with the design of producing some determinate effect, that the faculty of purpose is the will, and that therefore the influences of the will, however mysteriously and invisibly concealed in the well-adjusted fabric of rhetoric presented to the ear (or eye), must have worked their forces hither and thither through the whole mass of it,—if it accomplished its object, and that it must have done, if it is to be reckoned rightly among the masterpieces of eloquent speech. This may be better seen, perhaps, if we contrast one or two other forms of thought with that of eloquence.

Poetry is emotioned thought. But the thoughts are born and the emotions glow within the poet's self. In the refined imagination of the poet they harmonize themselves into a unity, and take to themselves a form of grace. It is the essence of the poet's own being which poetry reveals. It is in, for, and from himself he elaborates the honey-dew of song. It is the outflow of his own spirit which he gives to us. True poetry is

> "Attired in the majesty of art;
> Set high in spirit with the precious taste
> Of sweet philosophy; and, which is most,

> Crowned with the rich traditions of a soul
> That hates to have her dignity profaned
> With any relish of an earthly thought."

Its express purpose and function is to satisfy and gratify the poet's own mind. Its primary intention is not to move others,—to pass out of the poet into others as an effective cause of action. It is meant to be a means of affluent and all-suffusing enjoyment,—to be received for and be delighted in, by itself, without ulterior aim. In short, eloquence is spoken to be heard, and poetry is uttered that it may be overheard. Both are emotioned thought, but the direct intent of each is different, and this necessitates a difference of form.

Philosophy is clear, dry thought. It ought to be entirely unemotioned. It should be the free, spontaneous report of the intellect upon itself, its powers, laws, hopes, and destiny. It is inquisitive, critical, and reflective. It is matured in and elaborated from the mind itself, and gives expression to its findings in clear, full, reasoned language. But this language is arranged for exposition and instruction, and its aim is to teach, not to move, excite, and spur on to do the wish of the thinker. It teaches us that we may *know*, and that we may discipline ourselves in knowing.

Politics, though leaning towards practice, and necessitating discourse, and so giving cause for eloquence, aims at the management and control of men by law and government rather than by conviction, persuasion and inducement. It may occasion or employ eloquence, but it is not its province by the stirring utterance of emotioned thought to gain a given purpose by its delivery.

Logic is close-knit and unadorned. Its expressions are exact, terse, sinewy, and simple. It consists of the bare forms of thought filled up by the matter of thought. It operates on the reason only, and cannot touch the passions. It must underlie all rhetoric, and guide its purposes; but it is an aiding agency in eloquence, not eloquence itself—

> "Cette auguste science
> D'embellir la raison et de forcer les esprits."

Logic collocates words for mere use; eloquence not for use only, but with grace, power, fervour, and ingenuity.

Grammar, of course, as the mere arrangement of words

in accordance with the ordinary laws of language, though it is a preparation and requirement for eloquence, a necessary part of the training of an orator, can make no claim to being more than a simply initiatory step towards the forcible, copious, adorned, and purpose-filled use of speech as eloquence.

We need not pursue this process of drawing distinctions farther. It will be seen that the direct address of a speaker, having a given object before him to gain, expressed in such a manner as to pass most readily and effectively into a hearer's mind, and so to place, as it were, the spirit and feelings of the speaker into the audience, is the pith and essence of eloquence; and hence that the peculiarities not only of the speaker but of the audience demand attention, and do exert an overwhelming influence upon the manner in which the matter is presented,—given out and taken in.

This makes successful speaking a greater rarity in the present day than in former times. Not that the amount of eloquence is actually less, but because higher demands are made on the speaker, a loftier standard of judgment is adopted, and both speaker and hearer are consciously and unconsciously compelled to bring to the consideration of an oration now-a-days a far wider range of thoughts, feelings, and effects. These not only heighten the difficulty of producing really good orations, but prevent the public often from giving due credit to oratory, which in other times would have been adjudged to be of the highest and most perfect class of rhetorical effort. I have ventured to mention these with greater prominence than is usual among writers on public speaking, because I believe that the shirking of such difficulties as these deceives the student, and places public speaking in a false point of view before the hearer, the thinker, and reader.

Persuasion depends upon the proper employment and presentment of proofs, the manner in which these are set forth, and the method and keenness with which they touch some passions or emotions, active or excitable in the hearts of those whom a speaker addresses. These all require prudent management, and are each dangerous instruments if not warily used. The inexorable rigour of a true logic, and the inseparable requirements of a thorough-going rhetoric, must be well known to, and readily brought into active use

by one whose business it is to acquire the mastery of men's minds by addresses delivered to the public.

The passions are the great movers of men. It is much easier to stir the emotions than to convince the judgment. The reins of passion are far more firmly attached to the will than those of the intellect, and the volitions of men are much more habitually under the control of feeling than reason. Reason is calm, passion is impetuous. The vivacity and excitableness of the latter give them a greater instantaneousness of power than the steady, even pressure of the former; hence men often judge rashly and repent leisurely. From this circumstance arises the proverb, "*Second* thoughts are best," which, although itself fallaciously expressed, contains in it most excellent truth. It mistakes impulses for thoughts in the first instance, and likens the first quick notions of the spirit to the sedate judicial decisions of the reflective faculties; and to be quite truthful it should read, "Distrust impulses and trust thoughts," for thought is, truly speaking, the exertion of the intellectual faculty in accordance with its own specific laws, and cannot become other than it was, however frequently the process be repeated.

Man's passions constitute a portion of his being, and they have a proper use in the economy of life. They are intended to affect the will, and in their own specific office are unobjectionable as influences among men. They are indeed the mainsprings of activity, and they are the special objects of persuasion, while the reason is chiefly subject only to conviction. The orator who contents himself with arguments addressed to the intellect alone will have few triumphs; for the minds of most men, unhabituated to thinking, move slowly and reluctantly, while their passions, being constantly excited and exerted, are mobile, stirring, and influential. Hence the public speaker must learn to touch the secret springs of the sympathies of men, and to move them so that they shall lean to his. He who has acquired the tact by which passion is excited and managed can master men. If the sails be set to catch the wind, the bark will scud away under their influence with considerable disregard of the helm. Addresses to the passions rouse the dull, quicken the reflective, stir the stolid, affect the careless, and recall the absent-minded. They incline the will towards, or turn it from, the object of the speaker.

Mere speech is not eloquence; it is often only verbiage. Eloquence is the development of the involutions of a subject in such a way as to affect at once the intellect, the will, and emotions. It is not more an endowment than an attainment. Labour and learning are both requisite to form a finished orator. Nature and opportunity do much, but they cannot do all. The long results of earnest labour gleam out of every multitude-moving oration. Words, phrases, facts, arguments, marshalled by chance, and hurried together *extempore*, lose the main elements of effectiveness—order and unity of purpose. The grand aggregate of logical consecutiveness, definite arrangement, adequate expression, and soul-stirring energy, is manageable only when the masterful might of the mind's whole capability is exerted to secure submission, and maintain subordination. In the presence of a great crowd under the excitement of popular feeling; in the halls of legislation in the heat of a notable debate; in the pulpit stirred by the sacred fire of the mighty message proclaimed—thought, invigorated by the pulsings of passion, and dashing, with a giant's strength, from a mind full to trembling with the might of a great truth—may move with the efficacy of eloquence a listening audience. But he who would trust himself in any of these cases, or others of a similar nature, to the mere chances of having his thoughts lit up by the attrition of circumstances, and depend upon deriving thence the vivid metaphor, the graphic illustration, the scathing utterance of scorn, the fierce invective, the soul-subduing plea, the winning persuasiveness, the sarcastic irony, or the striking apostrophe of which the cause in which he desires to enlist sympathy might stand in need, would find his triumphs few, his success short-lived, and the duration of his notoriety

"Brief as the lightning of the collied night."

Speech has its laws and forms, its graces and peculiarities, its processes and technicalities. If the instrument must be employed, the art of using it should be learned; and to trust to mere chance management, when the right and true way may be readily acquired, is as absurd as it would be for one to act as he thought proper, and believe it to be lawful and right—without attempting to distinguish between right and wrong.

Speech, as we have said, has been the subject of scientific culture. Its principles have been discovered, and their applicability has been tested. Speech as an instrument of persuasion has been much studied. The observations of many thinkers have been reduced to system, and formed into a science. There is a great likelihood that these deductions, arrived at by eminent minds, are in the main correct, and that conformity to the laws which they have laid down will lead to the right employment of language as a means of producing certain effects upon the mind, while disagreement with or neglect of them may conduce to the defeating of the ends in view in using speech.

It is a fallacy common amongst many, that artistic speech can rarely be honest speech. To this we reply, art can only culture, not change nature; and it is as certain that culture can improve the natural eloquence of man, as that it can enhance his manufacturing skill; and that, in fact, the "art itself is Nature," for only in its artistic forms can it be said of eloquence that

> "It spreads the beauteous images abroad,
> Which else lie furled and clouded in the soul."

Successful eloquence, in all its forms, requires sound logic, apt arrangement, and fit expression, reputation and ability in the speaker, and a suitable demeanour and utterance. Truth best commends herself to the mind, when grace of manner, and worth of thought, combine to advocate her claims, and oppose her foes. To know an enemy's art is to accomplish half a conquest. "Eloquence, like every other weapon, is of little use to the owner, unless he have the skill and the force" to employ it rightly. If sophistry and truth contend with equal weapons, we need never fear for the issue; for the intrinsic power of the latter must secure a victory. If, however, the friends of truth leave themselves weaponless, or use the instruments of aggression or defence awkwardly, or keep them in the rude unpolishedness of their original condition, while her opponents brighten and sharpen theirs with the keenest skill, the contest is made unequal by the careless overconfidence of the parties engaged in the warfare for truth, not by the badness of her cause. It is an ill compliment to truth to lose her battles, and resign her strongholds,

Section I.—The Platform.

The platform is a modern institution. Public meetings and the right of free speech have given origin to a new mode of address, and a fresh form of eloquence. The *Times* has declared that "the easiest means of gaining a public character in Britain is that presented by the platform." We greatly doubt the correctness of the statement. The effective occupation of the platform is a task not accomplishable by many men; nor do all those who tread its conspicuous height succeed in putting it to its true use. This arises, we believe, from the non-recognition of the fact that there is a style of eloquence, specific in its character, which secures success on the platform, while other styles of public speaking fail to be effective. Orators often feel this, without knowing how or whence it is. Many a preacher who can step into the pulpit with assured composure, trembles when he rises to speak on a platform, and fails to impress and electrify there, though capable of producing considerable stir in auditories which assemble in a place of worship, and for the purpose of being religiously instructed. Many a politician feels a more palpable shiver passing through his frame when called to declaim from a platform, than he is sensible of when haranguing in the halls of the legislature. Many a speaker whose voice sways the jury, and sometimes even affects the judge, is conscious of an unaccustomed impediment in the flow of his thoughts, and the fluency of his address, when the counsel's bar is exchanged for the close-packed platform in a well-filled hall. The habits and associations of persons moving in these walks of life interfere with the ease of manner they have elsewhere acquired, and impart a sense of unusualness which mars their speech. Eloquence in platform oratory is confessedly less common than that of any other sort, and consummate adroitness is far less frequently seen in platformed halls than in any of the other great arenas of eloquence. There is an appropriateness of address from a platform seldom attained, but when heard is excessively attractive and successful. To get at the secret of this suitableness, and to discover, to some extent, its laws and its requirements, is intended to form the subject of our present consideration. Of course the reasons for the ideas proposed for

the reader's acceptance here given are grounded on the writer's belief that there is an eloquence of the platform distinct from that of the Pulpit, the Bar, or the Parliament, and that the oratory suitable to public meetings has laws of its own, and requirements which must receive attention, if genuine success is sought by those who employ it.

A public meeting is a concourse of a peculiar character, varying with the object, the promoters, the method of calling it, and the form of procedure, to be adopted at it. At a public meeting the courtesies of acquiescence are reduced to a minimum. No one, unless invested with office by the free will of the meeting, can stand on his dignity; for none is acknowledged. That it is a public meeting puts all men as nearly as possible on a level. It is, for the time being, a social deliberative republic, in which each man, by hypothesis, counts for as much as another. There is no provision made for personal or social influence or position. These are all, for the time and place, abnegated and in abeyance. Public meetings are

> "Niggards of respect
> To merit's unauthenticated forms."

All privileges depend on the will of the meeting, and all rights lie in their voice—except in so far as custom rules and fixes the ordinary etiquette of public meetings.

Speech must accommodate itself to its conditions, or it can never be effective, and unless effective it cannot be eloquence. He who would move a public meeting by speech must be careful to note

> "The bearings of men's duties and desires,"

and he must win their desires before he can impress them with a right sense of their duties. The first requisite in a platform speaker is *sympathy*—the power of loving conciliation—a fellow-feeling with the purpose, passion, movement, hope, fancy, or even whim of the time. If, by sympathy, a speaker can gain access to the hearts of the audience, he has acquired the very pivot-point of the helm-wheel of mankind, and he has only to work on and from that centre of power, to move them as and whither he would. He must, therefore, be one "that, with most quick agility, can turn and return; can make knots and undo them." but still keep possession of the master-seat of con-

viction—the sympathy of the audience. To be possessed of a nature, or to have acquired the art which enables us to feel, as if by transfusion, the emotions which are stirring in the inmost heart of another, and to utter, by an analogous impression of concern, language appropriate to his feelings and accordant with our own, is essential to the most effective platform oratory.

A platform speaker requires to be at once ingenious and ingenuous. Candour of view and honesty of utterance must be conjoined with plausibility and dexterity. His praise of his own party, aims, views, &c., must not be stated offensively, dogmatically, or vainglorously; for such a method of expression will act as a poignant stimulus to opposition and dislike: nor must he rate their value too low; for that will discourage their adoption, and defeat the intention of his speech. While the orator understands the subject much better than the generality of his audience (or wherefore speak?) he must seem to express their sentiments, to be the echo of their thoughts, and enforce his views by arguments adapted to their habits and hopes. We do not, let it be well understood, counsel cunningly devised speech and intriguing machinations for the accomplishment of base ends by base means, but we assert that versatility of talent and talk, attractive statement, and an agreeable manner, exert great influence in engaging the prepossessions of men. A good platform orator must have address to persuade, power to convince, acuteness to anticipate, and agility to evade objections, and should be able to mingle in due proportions vivacity and gravity, lightness of style and uprightness of purpose, sprightliness of humour and solidity of judgment. But Horace has already said this far better than we are able:—

"Ergo non satis est risu deducere rictum
Auditoris; et est quædam tamen hic quoque virtus:
Est brevitate opus, ut currat sententia, neu se
Impediat verbis lassas onerantibus aures;
Et sermone opus est modo tristi, sæpe jocoso;
Defendente vicem modo rhetoris atque poetæ,
Interdum urbani, parcentis viribus, atque
Extenuantis eas consulto. Ridiculum acri
Fortius et melius magnas plerumque secat res." *

Sermonum, lib. i., 10, 7—15.

* "It is not, therefore, satisfactory to provoke the broad laughter of the listener, although there is also a kind of merit in that: conciseness

The propriety of this variation of address is obvious on a moment's reflection. Hearers come together, in general, without any special tie to the orator; unless sometimes there may happen to be the loose feeling of common sympathy in one object, or the slight admiration filtered into them by report as to the orator's ability and success. Often they enter the hall with no feeling on the subject, or about the person, except the merest curiosity—which may even not be very lively. At other times there are adverse feelings in pre-existent activity against the speaker. Here, of course, the orator has the sympathy of numbers, which gives the platform speaker power and confidence, but it is not a unity of sympathy. The great primary object, then, is to work into the sympathies of the auditors, and to concentrate them, without loss of energy or activity, in favour of the objects in advocacy of which he speaks. Hence a witty and agreeable style, in which signs are given of power to wield the language of vehement invective against disturbers, to attack the mischievous and strike the contemptible, to use the phrases of conciliation towards honest opponents, and to employ the sportiveness of easy jocosity to overcome trifles, is the best a platform speaker can cultivate; for it makes him master of the general situation, and tact will soon tell him how to proceed, and with what forces to advance. A little adroit manœuvring, trying the *gamut* of the meeting's sympathies, will enable the orator to attune himself to the taste of the audience, and supply the keynote for his future address. Sense and intelligence, discrimination and amenity, are the feelers which an orator keeps in constant activity and restless use, to probe the sympathies of his auditors, and learn on what healthy and honourable one he can calculate, in dependence upon which, by skill and prudence, he can advance, from the opinions generally and willingly accepted and held as granted, to those farther reaches of advocacy, in a desire to carry his hearers to which he occupies the platform. Having found this, the progress

is requisite, that the sentence may flow on, nor embarrass itself with words that burden the wearied ears: there is need also for a style at once solid and playful, employing by turns the manner of a declaimer and a poet—sometimes that of the polished speaker, reserving his strength, and purposely refining it.

"Joking decides great things
Stronger and better oft than earnest can."

of a speaker is easy; for the sympathies of men follow the current of the hour, and a simultaneity of impressions produces in due time a similarity of impulses and proneness, so that the orator can readily "carry his audience along with him."

The second requisite in a successful platform orator is the power of laying hold of the popular sentiment, of the place, time, and people. Popular sentiment and prevailing opinions reach the mid-level of an argument, but seldom higher. The ordinary ideas of men are acquired by slow degrees from the great intelligences of preceding ages. Like the rivers whose sources are in high mountains, and which descend to the lower levels, so are great thoughts; they flow down to the lower ranks of society, and the ideas of a Bacon or a Shakspere become the proverbs of the people. The rays of the rising sun gild first the peaked summits of highland ranges, then slope into the valley lands, and make them rich with a borrowed beauty. Similarly do great ideas flash their light upon giant minds, and flow down gradually into the common working ranks of life, to stir and vitalize them. He who would move the mass to thought must be content to catch their thoughts as he best may, or he will never lead them captive; hence the value of the power of sympathy on which we have insisted—sympathy which places the spirit in relation not only with great thinkers but with ordinary minds.

Every notable platform speaker recurs to the popular sentiments of the day, and links his thoughts to those which are admitted and ordinary. Every orator successful with the masses acquires the art of making up his thoughts into concise and expressive epigrams—compact pellets of truth,—and putting them down as due continuations of commonly received ideas, or distinct analogues of already granted maxims. Hence it is that catchwords, proverbs, wise saws, quotations from popular poets or writers, sayings of sages or historic personages, hold such a prominent place in platform oratory, and prove so effective in addresses at public meetings. Hence it is that local allusions and illustrations take so well, and that concrete examples are always instanced as the premises whence are deduced the abstract truths which are sought to be inculcated. Hence the power of commonplaces on the platform that are effectless upon

paper, and the stir and bustle of emotion on the mention of names as advocates of ideas, or the clinching of an argument by an apt quotation, a proverbial expression, or even a slang phrase.

For the same reason, farfetched similitudes—learned, or, as they are sometimes called, lampish exordiums and perorations—almost always fail. They do not catch upon the sympathies of the listeners, they do not fall into the ranks with their usual army of arguments,—they are foreign auxiliaries, and not entirely trustworthy. The same fact gives the law of speech to the platform speaker. His usual diction must be pithy and Saxon. It must have the flavour and smack of life in it, be racy of the soil, be the vernacular of the people addressed. The sentences must be short and plain, free from involution and parenthesis. The grammatical construction may be somewhat loose, but ought never to be faulty. Wherever it is possible, the style should be direct and forthright, forcible and clear, and, when occasion serves, ornate, and yet chaste and fluent, though fervent. Eloquence should be the utterance of thought—

> "In language as the need should be;—
> Now poured at once forth in a burning flow,
> Now piled up in a grand array of words."

But care must be taken that the gorgeous phraseology of the rhetoricians is used as an agent to reveal thought, not to conceal the want of it.

The third essential in platform oratory is the power of recurrent reasoning. First principles lie at the foundation of all thought. They are present by implication in every discussion. The successful platform orator should plan all his address so as to show the rise of every idea he wishes to impress upon the minds of others out of acknowledged or easily understood and proven first truths. It is advisable in almost all cases to start with the most obvious and indisputable maxim possible—something so palpable as to be undeniable, and from that to rise up to the height of any argument requiring to be built upon it, then to retrace the progress made to that first starting-point in thought; analysis and synthesis being thus both exercised in the eliciting and probation of the opinions expressed. This recurrence of thought to its fountain-source in previous truths or maxims has the further utility of impressing the ideas

by a non-apparent repetition, and of bringing into activity, in the course of an exposition, a greater amount of mental energy. Recurrent reasoning, by revising while reversing the process of argumentations, imparts a greater sense of security to the hearer, and gives an increased appearance of trustworthiness to the speaker, who is by this simple expedient listened to with the hearer's approval as one sure not to disdain the criticism of his opinions in any light. It has another and perhaps a higher recommendation—it keeps the speaker closer to the actual outcome of his postulated premises, and prevents highflying and specious excursions beyond the line and limit of the field under survey. On one idea being thoroughly exhausted, another is to be laid down as acceptable, and tried, argued from in the same manner, and traced back, so that at last the whole course of thought may resemble a well-arched bridge,—at once a short and safe way, from the opinions already entertained and admitted, to that or those to which the speaker intended to lead his hearers. We are no advocates of dialectics in public speaking before a general audience. A formal parade of logic defeats its own aim. Logic is reasoning closely-knit and unadorned. Rhetoric is reasoning applied to persuasion, and therefore ornate and more diffuse—not less truly but less intricately interwoven, with graceful filling up, to add delight, but not to lessen right. Logic should build up the framework, but rhetoric should raise upon it the attractive fabric; thus, by variety of means, striving to secure the end of all oratory—persuasion. The matters chiefly to be avoided in platform speaking are evasive constructions, over-subtle refinements, elaborately unmeaning phraseology, impetuosity of thought, leading to the overleaping of steps in argument, or the play of the fancy unguided by reason. Specious arguments and false analogies, sonorous but ineffective declamation, affectation of method or pretence of carelessness, are each almost equally fatal to platform success.

And here we must enter a *caveat* against the introduction of apologetical *exordia*, or advertisements of want of preparation. No man, unless specially and unexpectedly called upon, either by the audience, or from a sense of duty, or by being the object of personal or official remark, has any right to address a public meeting without due preparation,

or without sufficient forewarning. It is, in many cases, either asserting too much of one's self, or thinking too little of the audience, or using the figures of rhetoric as covers for falsehood, to plead an appearance before the public unprepared. Due intimation is in general both given and received, and if the man who is named as expected, or who intends to speak, does not prepare himself for the part he has undertaken, he acts unjustly both to himself and the public. It is permissible to apologize when truth requires it; but even then we question the policy of apology—unless it be as a mere parenthesis, casually, as it were, dropped into the address, without stress laid on it, or importance attached to it. In men of culture, and habituated to public speaking, it is reprehensible as affectation, if untrue,—as being beside the question, if a genuine statement. Either they understand the subject or they do not. If the former, let them speak out their thoughts; if the latter, why speak at all? On most subjects of importance sufficient to excite general interest, warranting the calling of a public meeting, such men should have their ideas constantly in a presentable shape, and false delicacy ought not to be employed upon a matter involving a mere affair of personal vanity and pride. What the audience requires are thoughts on the question—matured thoughts, of course, if possible; cultured ones, if the former cannot be had; but not indigested ones; least of all do they desire their minds to be taken off the question in admiring criticism of the orator's facility and fertility.

Oratory should excite immediate admiration, not of the speaker but of the thought. "If," said the ancient orator Rufus, "If you have leisure to admire *me*, I have spoken effectlessly." An apology is, in the vast majority of cases, merely an aside of self-gratulation,—of undue self-depreciation, to acquire an equally undue public appreciation. It is essentially a mistake: an apology ought never to be used unless when the cause in agitation would suffer if some apologetic statement were not made. We are perfectly aware of the power of fashion, but the decision of reason is given against apologies as rhetorical artifices, because they fall effectless as blunted arrows on the hearers, and they, even when true, seldom effect the argument, although they may the person. They have also the disastrous effect of

making it impossible to find a believing audience when the real occasion for an apology occurs. Let platform orators, like the ancient epic poets, dash into the advocacy on which they are bent at once and without preface. They will then show that the interests of truth, in their regard, outweigh the pettiness of personal vanity, convenience, or applause-catching, and they will not only persuade their auditors better on the points at issue, but also convince them more readily and truly of their own individual power

"To wield the thunder of Demosthenes."

In all cases in which preparation is possible we commend writing out any intended speech. Not that we advise the sedulous employment of caligraphy and *memoriter* repetition; for this gives stiffness and pedantic unimpressibility to the finest composition. We recommend an orator to write out his speeches (or at least the chief portions of them), even although he may never deliver a word he has put upon paper. Writing promotes deliberation, induces methodicalness, and tends to brevity, correctness, and strength. The noblest orations of antiquity are concise, pithy, to the point, and stirring. The olden orators never allowed the energies of their hearers to evaporate into inane admiration. They eschewed everything foreign to their main object, and they did not weaken their own and their auditors' powers of resolve by diffuse and random utterances, flexile irrelevancies, or blatant and flatulent commonplaces. What is called "spinning out" they were too wise to attempt. They struck with the clenched fist, not with the open palm. They triumphed by the force, not by the length of their discourse. Their thoughts were

"Like bars of sunshine in shut rooms,
Mid gloom all glory."

The success of platform oratory depends, so far as the speaker is concerned, on, 1st, his personal character; 2nd, his comprehension of the subject; 3rd, the substantiality of his reasoning; 4th, his power of evoking sympathy, and of bringing his topics within the current of those sympathies which he has excited; 5th, the prominence, if not the predominance, which he imparts to his subject; 6th, his acquaintance with and use of language, illustrations, figures,

and motives likely to induce the persons addressed to act on the ideas he enforces; and 7th, the essential goodness of the cause he has espoused. Many circumstances conduce to the success of platform addresses which are in some measure accidental—*e. g.*, 1st, the state of the public mind; 2nd, the party in a place identified with a cause; 3rd, the promoters of a meeting and the occupants of a platform; 4th, the committee entrusted with the prior arrangements, and the officials of the meeting; 5th, the manner in which the subject is made to fit in with the influences working in its favour; and 6th, the aspect a movement is made to wear by its partisans, especially its platform advocates.

On these, however, it is needless to enlarge to readers who know how precarious, and dependent on time, place, circumstance, and personality, platform eloquence is. The hints we have given should be enough to suggest much more to a like effect, or we shall have missed our aim. We have no wish to exhaust this topic, new though it be to rhetoric. We desire only to open the vein, and to let our readers work out the rich material thus disclosed to their view. Traditional rhetoric has contented itself with following the old waymarks of Greek, Roman, and Mediæval oratory, and has omitted to note the change of life to which our civilization has led us; and it has neglected to trace the labours of eloquence in the new spheres which modern manners have opened up to it. We have here attempted to signalize the special characteristics of platform speaking, and must turn now, though more briefly, to other unnoted fields, wherein the eloquence of modern life is heard.

Section II.—The Hustings.

The hustings is a political platform. It is only an ephemeral and occasional place of public speech. The eloquence delivered from it is petitionary, complimentary, agitating, and both apprehensive and passionate. It has a temporary object to serve, and effectiveness is that which is chiefly aimed at. Intensity, emphasis, rapidity, force, are therefore more sought than elegance, refinement, or distinctness. Keen, close party warfare is, in general, the order of the day on the hustings; and speech, to be effective in party warfare, must be incisive, flashing,—in fact, words must be

swords. There must, however, always be sufficient policy employed in hustings speeches to allow of graceful retractation; and due provision must be observed for the "forget and forgive" amenities with which its business usually closes. A good deal of the froth and fury of electioneering is gasconade,—is never to be interpreted literally,—and is permissively used as a portion of the *tactique* by which the public may be moved. It is, commonly, sonorous and rounded, ornate and ambiguous, seemingly strong, earnest, emphatic, unyielding; but the use of adverbs and qualifying phrases, pronounced as if unimportant, and seldom uttered with much effort at audibility, affords ready escape from specific charges. The chief aims of a hustings speech are to soothe opposition, flatter one's own party, alarm the hearers, and ridicule the candidates who offer themselves for office, their supporters, and their party. This is generally effected by overrating the support and popularity of one's own set, and aggravating the unpopularity of the opposition. Hustings oratory has thus always a double duty to perform—to attack and to defend. Either process requires attention to—1st, the statement of principles; 2nd, the narration of facts; 3rd, the interpretative inferences deduced from these; 4th, the exposure of fallacies, mistakes, misapprehensions, or misrepresentations in any of them; and 5th, the criticism of contradictory statements, topics, or questions. The manner of hustings addresses ought to vary with their aim. As a general rule, they ought to commence humbly, advance to familiarity, slide into advice-giving, rise to admonition, spring into passion, break out into ridicule, and hasten into pathos, then end with a solemn and serious epitome of the state of the question as left in the hands of the hearers for decision. This peroration should be succinct, clear, and well arranged. It should touch the prevailing passion of the place and the hour. In it the strong points should be enforced, and the weak should be slipped airily over. Consideration should be claimed for only alluding to the latter, as the time and interest of the audience demand the sacrifice from the speaker, and he should be careful to remark that he is sure that the points omitted will receive a kindly review from all auditors who recollect the duty of impartiality—to give the benefit of any doubt to one debarred from full explanation.

In attacking, the proper rhetorical tactic is to commend the opponent as much as possible early in a speech, that the orator may gain the favourable ear of the audience for honourable forbearance and gentlemanliness, and that the aggravation, which ought always to occupy the close, may be heightened by the praise formerly given,—the brightness of the previous light increasing the darkness of the subsequent shadow. In defending, the objections should be taken up, whenever possible, at the beginning, and without apology. These should be taken in such a way as to intermix those which can be fully and adequately explained away with those which can only be partially so. Then the closing portions of the speech should be uttered, on the assumption that *all* have been as satisfactorily disposed of as *some* have. To do this effectively we must amplify, extenuate, renarrate, and criticise. All that has been said against the speaker or his party ought not to be scouted and flouted as calumny; some portion should in general be admitted and disapproved of, but it should be such as does not seriously affect the question at issue; and even this admission may be employed as a ground of gaining favour for one's self, or for keeping it from an adversary.

As to diction, hustings addresses ought to be pure, clear, and easy; and as to method, they should be so arranged as to excite the hearers' favourable attention, to state the point in dispute plainly, to support it vigorously, to confute objections to the speaker's aim, to enforce what makes in his own behalf, to extenuate what makes against him, to push objections against his adversary, and to appeal to the prevailing feelings of the hearers in such a manner as to enlist these in the orator's favour. The position to be assumed by the hustings speaker also requires preliminary consideration. He may be—1st, lofty and authoritative, and speak as if to underlings, whom it is patronage to address; 2nd, he may be humble or conciliatory—mining his way into the affections of his auditors; 3rd, he may be evasive and cautious—feigning to be frank, yet abstaining from absolute statements of views; 4th, he may be straightforward and independent—throwing himself wholly upon the right and justice of his claims to consideration; 5th, he may be, in different parts of his oration, a mixture of each. The choice must depend upon the relative position of the

speaker and his hearers; but upon that choice much of the efficacy of hustings oratory depends.

Section III.—The Vestry.

Vestry eloquence has of late acquired a sort of notoriety which makes its consideration in a work relating to the various modes of speaking at public meetings necessary to completeness. It may be defined to signify—having regard to its customary use—that deliberative yet advocatory species of speech which is employed in the management of local or specific business, when the matter is fixed, and the method of executing it alone, or at least almost wholly, gives rise to difference of opinion. Though taking its designation primarily from a room in a church, in which parochial meetings are usually held, its implication is by no means so narrow as that name connotes. It extends to most kinds of speech which discuss the management of local business, guided by local wants, and under the influence of local feelings, interests, or partisanships. Perhaps we might say that it implies a kind of parochiality instead of generality of reference. It includes proceedings at common council boards, directorates, meetings of guardians, committees of management, commissioners' sittings, assemblages of ratepayers, trustees, trades' delegates, congresses, mission-managers, some sorts of presbyterial and synodal business, &c., &c., which are "more easily imagined than described."

Such modes of speech as are employed for the carrying on of local business, or the carrying out of specific schemes, although sometimes sneered at, have their several uses. The greatest difficulty in such affairs is to keep the style of speaking proportionate to the matter in hand. Modelling the form of procedure upon the fashion in wider and higher circles, the vestry orator is liable to the suspicion of ranting. The stump oration is, of all things rhetorical, perhaps the most injudicious and inartistic. A frothy shower of words, big as the utterance of the early gods, expended on the trivialities of parish work, or little local splits and factions, makes that hideous which is of itself entitled to proper consideration and weight, and so defeats its own end. That speech is eloquent which is suitable to its purpose, and none else. It is not the sparkle of the phrases, or the sound of the diction, but the relativeness to the purpose,

that makes a speech eloquent. The oratory of the vestry ought to concern itself with details, applications, methods of effecting ends. It ought never, or at least seldom, to expound principles, generalize upon "eternal verities," or lay down maxims swept from metaphysics. It ought to be content to observe decency and order. The general principles which actuate men's conduct may be alluded to and founded on, but ought not to be demonstrated as well as applied. Show and effect are out of place in the transaction of local business. The vestry speaker requires a full and competent knowledge of time, place, manner, motive, cause, effect, end, persons, and things, with their powers and relations. These he should not only survey, but balance. He ought to distinguish between those which are fixed or occasional, inseparable or peculiarly accidental. He should consider the special nature of the matters under investigation, what observation and experience teach regarding their actions and relations, what wise and honest men report of them, or what testimony for and against has been offered about them. He should determine whether these proofs are sufficient or insufficient, invariable or precarious. He ought to guard against mistaking a strong but strange special concurrence for a fixed general fact; and discriminate between the elements of a fact and the opinions mixed up with the narration of it or derived from it, so as to separate the positive from the inferential. Upon all these processes of thought he ought to bestow the best efforts of his intellect before speaking; fix in his mind carefully the object he thinks should be aimed at, and in the briefest manner lay before his hearers that opinion, with its reasons. The opinion may often with advantage be written down, as it may be useful in making or revising a motion; besides, it is thus less liable to be misinterpreted or misunderstood, departed from, or explained away. The reasons must be given in the order leading most directly from the state of the question to the proposed method of determination, and their connection should be carefully placed within view of the hearers. It is unadvisable, therefore, to argue upon their relevancy *seriatim*, but to give them expression closely linked and evidently conjoined. Plain, direct, and concise language; reasoning resting upon widely admitted general principles; argument free from ambiguity or subtlety; a

manner frank, straightforward, and honest; and a tone earnest, reliant, yet not importunate, seem to be the special characteristics of successful vestry eloquence.

Section IV.—The Lecture-room.

The eloquence of the lecture-room requires much notice, but can here only get a little. The whole field of knowledge, and all the resources of rhetoric, lie before a lecturer. He may content himself with the humble themes of village history or parochial economics, or endeavour to expound the progress and destiny of nations or the principles of universal prosperity. He may lead the audience with interest through the fields and over the hills of his immediate neighbourhood, and tell them, meanwhile, the geological secrets to be learned, and the botanical beauties to be seen, in their daily walks; or he may cause them to cast their vision away into the infinite spaces of creation, and show them the illimitable sweep of the Almighty energy whose will formed and sustains all that occupies the measureless vastness of the universe in being and well-being. He may narrate the short and simple annals of some village notoriety, may unbare the mysteries of reason, or open the volumes of science and imagination for the benefit and gratification of his hearers. Art, science, literature, life, history, morals, legislation, and religion, may all in turn be touched upon and adorned in the addresses delivered in our modern lecture-room.

The lecture-room is a resort for instructive excitement. The object of the occupant of its desk is to inform agreeably, and to interest the hearers in the search for knowledge. There is, perhaps, little scope afforded for the stirring of the more energetic passions of our nature, but there is ample opportunity for exciting the nobler emotions, and quickening into activity those which operate most beneficially in every-day life. The social emotions are almost always in such a state among the hearers of a lecture that they are peculiarly impressible. Indeed, the social acquisition of knowledge, the sympathetic pursuit of some common study or theme, is one of the greatest recommendations and attractions of the lecture-hall. The hearers come, from a common bent of inclination, to listen to the address; they are self-brought and self-guided. Various as

are their positions and dispositions, they have this one uniting bond,—this one impulse growing into a habit,—that of seeking for intellectual refreshment or nourishment. There is a proclivity to social sympathy, and a certain calculable amount of sameness of purpose in all such audiences, and this affords the lecturer a notable advantage in the delivery of his address.

A lecture, as a general rule, ought to be a summary of the topic on which it is written,—a miniature treatise on the specific subject chosen or fixed on. A perfect summary should contain distinct notice of all the matters necessary to enable the audience to acquire wholeness, though not fulness, of view. However cursorily, it ought to include all the essentials of the subject, and these should be so disposed as to produce a clear presentation and adequate conception of the matter of which it treats. Form and method require attention in lectures, otherwise the instructive element and characteristic will be altogether wanting. It is, by a licence of speech not very commendable, becoming usual to call any oral discourse a lecture. This is far from being correct. A lecture implies previous choice, preparation, authority on the subject, a deliberate aim to instruct and interest, and an adaptation of the material and the form of the discourse to the hearers and the purpose. The lecturer speaks magisterially, claims attention, and expresses himself as one entitled to the respectful consideration of his hearers as one who has something to communicate which it behoves them to listen to, for their duty on that point is held as implied in their presence at the lecture.

The eloquence of the lecture-hall should be staid and earnest; instructive, yet pleasing; scholarly enough to win the approval of students, and plain enough to be comprehended by ordinary minds. Lectures should be largely expository and advocatory, but they ought seldom to be propagandist or hortatory. They are addressed more to the understanding than the will; they set forth their subject more in the dry light of the intellect than the moist light of passion; the reason more than emotion is to be stirred and attracted. Hence the style, without being elaborate, should be lucid and perspicuous, free alike from wilful involutions or intricacy of language, and from those obscurities which originate in hyper-subtlety and abstractness.

While exhibiting at once a great spirit and a busy heart, method and thought, lectures ought to be both impressive and intelligible,—such as may gain the attentive consideration of the hearer, not only while the voice of the speaker vibrates on the ear, but when the silence of reflectiveness revises the prelection. The gravest matters need not be made drowsy or dull. The enlivenment of taste, fancy, familiar illustrations, touches of humour, and sentiments striking for their grace, truth, and sympathetic tones, may be advantageously employed in the treatment of almost any topic. It is in the dark the stars shine brightest and the vision of thought is projected into the far vastness of immensity. In it we learn the lessons daylight fails to teach us, of

"The thousand deathless miracles of beauty"

which lie upon the outskirts of heaven's horizon, and lead the thoughts to an inestimable stretch beyond. So the abstrusest themes of thought or nature, when they are interpreted aright, do not show dark to the onlooker, or, if they do, are dark only with excessive brightness. If a lecturer is unable to enliven his subject with oratorical graces, as well as to impart instruction upon it, he is in the wrong place—the study, not the lecture desk, should find him employment.

A lecturer should avoid opinionativeness, an overweening or arrogant deportment, or a scorner's heedlessness of his audience. Earnest and interesting, fertile and fluent, conciliatory and encouraging, are the characteristics by which the best lecturers are described. Indeed, we cannot see how the prime purpose of a lecture can be fulfilled, namely, the communication of information trustworthily and agreeably, unless there is manifested by the lecturer urbane consideration, due acquaintance with his subject, and a fair appreciation of his own relation to his auditory.

It may be useful, before closing this part of our exposition, to point out a few slight differences which obtain in the manner of conducting such meetings as those which give scope for the modes of speaking described under the previous three headings; this, therefore, we briefly proceed to do.

I. *Hustings Meetings.*—The *Hustings*, according to Cowel, is derived from the French *Haulser*, to raise, to hoist; Somner deduces it from the Old English *Hyhst* (highest)

and *Thing* (cause, subject requiring decision); and Spelman —who describes it as "the most ancient and high Court of the City of London" makes it equivalent to *domus causarum* (*hus* house, and *thing* cause), the house of judgments. In historic fact the word *Hustings* came to mean a platform, fixed or temporary, in a public place, on and from which Members of Parliament were proposed and nominated for Election, as "fit and proper persons" to represent the Electors of a burgh or county, and through them the inhabitants thereof, in the House of Commons. Recent legislation has so altered the form of nomination that it is no longer necessary to appear on the public hustings in support of a candidature for parliamentary honours. Use and wont have, however, extended the original signification of Hustings and made it a designation for any meeting called together to hear an address or statement from a candidate for election to Parliament or from a member of the Legislature who may, for any political reason, desire to affect and influence a constituency. Indeed *Hustings* might now almost be regarded as synonymous with *electioneering*, and it is sometimes employed with such latitude as to be equivalent to *political*. In this place, however, we use it as denotive of a public meeting held mainly with the aim of pressing upon a constituency the claims to political favour of some person or persons who desire (or possess) the right to represent it; or for the advocacy of some political opinion.

The special nature of such a meeting affects, in some measure, its order and details. Those who appeal to the hustings either have (or are supposed to have) some special right or claim to a hearing and appear, in general, either in compliance with a requisition or in the discharge of a duty. The invitation may emanate either from the candidate (or member) himself, from the friends whom he has won to his interest, or those who lead in the party to which he is attached, or hold the views he wishes to set forth. The purpose of such a meeting—viz., to hear a statement of aims, claims, opinions and proposals, fixes its nature and character. All who attend are morally bound, by accepting the invitation, to give a fair, candid, and patient hearing to the hustings orator. But—unless there has been some specialty in calling the meeting—they are no

farther bound than this. Their presence does not imply an *à priori* approval of the speaker's claims, views, or even party. He has come to put these to the test of popular acceptance or rejection: Hence, the public may rightly (if they see fit) refuse to register their votes in favour of the person or the views brought before them. It is only, however, fairly competent to negative by silence or by vote any propositions laid before the meeting. To make, and attempt to carry, a substantive motion in favour of any other candidate or proposal would invade the rights of those (to whichever party they belong) who called the meeting for an express purpose, and who, having undertaken the responsibilities and expenses of it, have a just claim for fair dealing, and that no undue use (against them) should be made of what they initiate and have to pay for. The honourable conduct, the etiquette we may say, of such public meetings seems to be, that the chairman, candidate, and public supporters of the party calling the meeting should get a fair hearing; that no attempt should be made to override them, or, by merely factious opposition, impede the business before the meeting; and that any disagreement between the promoters and the audience should be emphasized only by dissent from and negation of the proposals they make. The opposing party have the same liberty of meeting, governed by the same etiquette, and hence any rowdyism, disturbance, assault of speakers, destruction of furniture, invasion of platform, or other form of riotous behaviour is an offence at once against the right of public meeting and against the law.

II. *Vestry Meetings* usually follow "an order of business" set forth on the intimation sheet calling the members. It is, as a general rule, incompetent to take up any business except such as is thus "put on the card." The only exception made to this rule is when an emergency of such an unforeseen and sudden nature has arisen that it could not have been put upon the *agenda*-paper and cannot properly be delayed till another ordinary stated meeting. In such cases the chairman, with the advice and consent, generally, of those who arrange and ordinarily manage affairs (committee, &c.), proposes "the suspension of the standing orders," so that this (exceptional) business may be taken up. The meeting (if this motion is carried) then becomes,

so far, a *pro re rata* one. All business on the *agenda*-paper should be taken up in the order therein set down (unless some special circumstance, considered to be sufficient by the meeting, is adduced to alter the course of business); and, as a rule, it should be disposed of in one way or another. Business may be remitted, with powers or instructions, to committees or individuals. If it be found impossible to deal with all that is before the meeting in the ordinary way, consideration of any special matter may be adjourned, by resolution, to a future meeting. Such business, in general, takes precedence in the order of the day, at the next meeting. In most cases discussion of general questions is avoided in vestry meetings; details rather than principles being what require settlement in them. As this is the case, the right of speech is very freely allowed, at the discretion of the chairman, and the discussions which arise are, in general, conducted rather in the fashion of a committee, wherein a member can speak as occasion requires, than in that of a formal meeting, in which a person, not the original mover of a motion, having once spoken, is not entitled to be heard again, though he may be permitted to have a re-hearing by courtesy. "Having the chair" means being in possession of the government of the meeting or having its sanction for what is being done. "Being in possession of the house" is to have (sanctioned) right to address the meeting.

III. *Lecture-room Meetings.*—The management of such meetings is, usually, a matter of the utmost simplicity. It is understood that those who attend do so for a well-defined purpose, duly intimated and arranged for. Their attendance, therefore, allows it to be taken for granted that they are present on the terms and for the purposes announced. These they have, of course, the right to get implemented to the full, and these the promoters are in duty bound (unless from some unforeseen and unavoidable cause) to see rightly and properly fulfilled. It is scarcely possible, therefore, that any difficulty should arise. The chairman and the lecturer, with the promoters (if any), take their places on the platform. The chairman briefly states the subject and introduces the lecturer. The lecturer proceeds with his task, and, when this is concluded, (unless some action is proposed to be taken as a result

of the lecture, when it really becomes a speech in favour of a motion and may have an amendment proposed upon it, if that has not been guarded against) the meeting is closed—with or without votes of thanks or other form according to the custom of the locality, &c. In many cases the lecturer acts as his own chairman, and in constituted bodies no chairman really appears, because the lecturer occupies his position and exercises his functions under the authority of the President, Principal, Chancellor, or other governing power who is *de jure* ruler of the meeting though he may not be *de facto* present. If anything arises to hinder the carrying out of the intended lecture, apology should be made, the causes explained, and offer (if possible) of something substitutionary laid before the meeting, which has, of course, the right of acceptance or rejection; the exercise of the option, in this case, in either way, ought to be quite free, and ought to carry no other loss with it than that of the time and trouble spent in attending the meeting.

Those who desire further information on the principles of oratory may be referred to "The Art of Public Speaking,"—and those who require instruction or training in the methods and laws of controversy will find these explained and set forth in "The Young Debater" and "The Debater's Handbook"—small works by the author, issued by the same publishers, which will be found helpful to those who wish to take an active part in "Public Meetings," or who may require to know "How to Conduct Them."

We have now brought our task to a close. Our aim has been to bring into brief compass and readily-understood form a statement of the chief laws which govern, and the main customs which guide, those deliberative gatherings in which the people, "in public meeting assembled," consider, mature, and declare their opinions on affairs of interest, and set in motion those means by which due effect may be given to public opinion as an important factor in the settlement of local or general business. The thought and the endeavour have been ours. It now rests with the reader to use and apply the instructions set before him, so as to show the utility and value of the information given on "Public Meetings and How to Conduct Them."

APPENDIX.

I.—Working Men's Clubs and Institutes.

About seventeen years ago, Douglas William Jerrold—the British Jean Paul Richter, and more,—in one of the few public speeches he delivered, uttered the following wise and witty saying:—"The growing spirit of our day is the associative spirit. Men have gradually recognised the great social truth, vital in the old fable of the bundle of sticks; and have begun to make, of what would otherwise be individual weakness, combined strength; and so, small sticks, binding themselves together, obtain at once the strength of *clubs*." In those days, when the Whittington Club was a marvel, as it has since been stated to be a mockery, the idea of a club gave greater prominence to wealth than strength, and the suggestion which these words expressed was looked upon as revolutionary, —"If we have clubs of nobles, wherefore not clubs of clerks?" Though the thought has not been vivified by energy, forethought, endeavour, and success, among the classes here specifically noted, it has not faded altogether out of the minds of men, and we have now the idea of working men's clubs brought into living actuality in our own days, so true it is that "*Time works wonders.*"

The Rev. Henry Solly, in 1861, read before the Social Science Congress, held in Dublin, a paper on "Working Men: a glance at some of their wants, with reasons and suggestions for helping them to help themselves," which gathered together and brought into one view a great many good thoughts on this subject, and served as a concentrating agency to many holders of similar opinions all over the country,—men who felt that the "let alone" system was unfair and unjust in a case where all the temptations of capital were exerted for the determination of the condition of the working man. As men of like mind aggregated and considered, the practical English question—What shall be done?—was mooted and renewed, until a Union was formed, with Lord Brougham as president, a number of noble vice-presidents, the Rev. H. Solly as secretary, and a large intelligent and influential council, under the designation of "The Working Men's Club and Institute Union."

The object of the Working Men's Club and Institute Union is to form a centre, from which there may ray out advice, help, and encouragement to working men, in any locality desirous of gaining a place of meeting, affording opportunities for rational amusement, recreation, and conversation, free from the evil enticements of the public-house, facilities for carrying on the work of self-improvement and spreading a knowledge of sanitary laws, or any other kind of information adapted to interest or to be beneficial to working men; at the same time that it may be a companionable and social resort, where workmen out of place may find help in their struggles, affectionate sympathy, and effective aid —aid to find an opportunity of earning wages, gaining knowledge, &c.

A working man's club ought to be a house of call; a place of enjoyment; a quiet, cosy snuggery to meet his friends in; a reading-room where excitements abound to entice to reading; a sort of general parlour and drawing-room for the people. In a working man's club the law should be that each man should be a law unto himself.

To start working men's clubs with high intellectual aims is a fallacy; to begin them with the expectation of performing some sort of mysterious pantomimic transformation scene from every-dayism to paradisaic morality is nonsense. Let it have an every-day aim. Let it be meant for social life; not in the coarse, vulgar sense of riot and revelry, but in that of friendly association and companionship. If it be begun so, like-minded will soon aggregate together, and get up the æsthetic, moral, and intellectual adjuncts to such a club. Certain classes of artisans will yearn for teaching in drawing; others for lessons in mechanics; some will be anxious to hear good reading; others will be eager to acquire the art of reading well themselves. Chat over the newspapers, and criticisms over the magazine, will awaken the desire for rightly conducted controversy, and that desire will tend towards creating a wish to comprehend the anatomy of argument, and to gain the power of accurate expression; and so the wheel of progress being set in motion, it will run right onward along the pathway of improvement.

But the working man's club must not be made a rival to home: and the

sympathies of the mothers of a district ought to be duly enlisted in its prosperity. If this be done, on washing days the son or husband will be sure to be urged to go to the club; and when any extra work in the cleaning-up line is to be done, the club will be suggested as a fit place to spend the requisite hour in. When any local or village extra is going on, such as a *fête* or a fair day, the club should take it up, and use it to give the females of the working classes a taste of the quality of the institution, by providing entertainments in which they can share I do not see why mother's day meetings, when desirable, might not be held in the club, and a portion of the social life of it be fitted for their sharing.

In all cases of starting or carrying on working men's clubs, as many facilities and inducements to well-doing should be conjoined as possible. Among these let us suggest conveniences for writing letters, for settling small matters of business, for private conferences of friends, for acquiring information about the state of trade in the district, for making known the want of employment by men, and the need of workmen by employers, for subscribing for periodicals, for making local subscriptions in cases of need, for holding the meetings of funeral; friendly, building, or other such societies, for getting acquainted with the workings of the Penny, Savings, and Post Office banks, &c.

The management of such clubs and institutes as have for their object the culture, improvement, or recreation of the working classes (whether artisan or agricultural), ought in all cases to be arranged for by rules, carried out in a business-like manner, and requires the aid, co-operation, and systematic consultation of the parties most interested—those who frequent and use them. Patrons often, by over zeal, neglect to employ and exercise the earnestness, energy, ability, and sympathy of the members of such associations, by doing everything *for* and nothing *by* them. Only such social institutions as are in some sort managed by the people are likely to gain and retain healthy life, true usefulness, and real prosperity. The growth of character, self-respect, and general capacity for business among the people ought to be kept constantly in view by the promoters of all such associations as "Working Men's Clubs and Institutes."

II.—Scheme of Rules Suitable for Mutual Improvement, Debating, &c., Societies.

I. *Name.*—That this Society be called the [ ] Society.

II.—*Object.*—That the object of this Society shall be and is [state special object.]

III.—*Mode and Form of Admission.*—That any one desirous of acquiring membership shall be proposed by one member and seconded by another, at an ordinary meeting, and be admitted by vote [ballot, show of hands, calling of the roll, &c.], at [on or after] ——— meeting [or date].

IV. *Agency.*—That the agency employed for this object shall be [ ].

V. *Committee.*—That the business of the Society be conducted by a President, [ ] Vice-Presidents, Secretary, and Committee of [ ], to be chosen by ballot at the annual meeting. [ ] of the Committee present to form a quorum. At each meeting of the Society the President shall preside; whom failing, the senior member of Committee, or any member of the Society chosen by vote as Chairman (*pro tem.*).

VI. *Duties of Committee.*—That the Committee shall decide upon and arrange the general business of the Society [and the Secretary shall announce the nature and order thereof in any circular issued, or immediately after reading the minutes of the previous meeting].

VII. *Funds.*—That each member shall pay a [weekly, monthly, quarterly, yearly, &c.] subscription of [ ] in advance.

VIII. *Meetings.*—That the ordinary meetings be held [ ] commencing at [ ] o'clock, and close at [ ]; and that extraordinary meetings may be called on the requisition of not less than [ ] members, and with a clear warning of [ ] days from the date of the issue of the secretary's intimation of such a meeting and its purpose.

IX. *Admission.*—Members shall have the privilege of introducing friends to the ordinary or such other meetings as may from time to time be determined on. See Rule III.

X. *Attendance.*—The ordinary meetings shall commence at [ ], and any member failing to be present at [ ] must present an excuse to the meeting at its close, and if not satisfactory a fine of [ ] shall be inflicted for each offence. Those unable to attend must present a written excuse to the secretary,

or be liable to the same fine. That in case of any member absenting himself from [ ] meetings, the Secretary shall communicate with him, and if no satisfactory reason be assigned, his connection with the association shall cease, or be held to have ceased.

XI. *Forfeiture.*—That any member, having forfeited the confidence of the society, may be expelled by a majority of [or two-thirds of] the members at an ordinary or special meeting.

XII. *Debate.*—1. All remarks to be addressed to the chair, and allusions by name to be avoided. 2. The introducer of the debate, and introducer of adjourned debate, to be allowed [ ] minutes for his address; succeeding speakers [ ] minutes only. 3. Personalities and local personal allusions excluded, and if used to be severely condemned. 4. No member to be allowed to speak a second time on the same question until others have had an opportunity of doing so. 5. The chairman for the evening to be elected from the members present. 6. The chairman to take no part in the debate. 7. The chairman to be the highest authority in case of dispute, but a right of appeal [in writing] to the committee to be allowed, whose decision shall be final.

XIII. That the foregoing rules shall be held as unalterable, unless rescinded by a majority at an annual or special meeting, of which a [fortnight's] notice must be given; and the society shall not cease, except by decision of [more than] two-thirds of its members.

III.—A Classified View of the Different Kinds of Public Meetings.

1. *Political.*—Electioneering, hustings, agitational, deliberative, controversial, reform, financial, demonstrational, &c.

2. *Religious.*—Convocation, diocesan, associative, charitable, conference, convention, missionary, general assembly, synodal, presbyterial, sessional, prayer, young men's Christian associations, anniversary services, church or chapel, Sabbath school union, mothers', &c.

3. *Social.*—Anniversary or other dinner, soirée or tea meeting, supper, picnic or excursion parties, flower shows, club, glee, choral, and other musical gatherings, celebrations, festivals, &c.

4. *Civic and Municipal.*—Jury, county, commissioners of supply, council, parochial, vestry, ward, guild, election, assessment, appeal, school board, licence courts, &c.

5. *Commercial or Economic.*—Chamber of commerce, exchange, arbitration, bankruptcy, creditors', bank directors' and shareholders', trade conferences, co-operative associations, company audits, &c.

6. *Literary.*—Royal Society, British and Social Science Association, Guild of Literature and Literary Fund, Royal Institution, graduates' class lectures, convocation, mechanics' institutes, general or special lectures, penny readings, working men's clubs, mutual improvement and debating societies, art unions, &c.

IV.—A Syllabus of the Arrangements for Public Meetings.

1. The following *preliminaries* require attention, viz:—

i. That due *intimation* be made (in some public form) of (1) the time—day and hour—(2) place, and (3) purpose [subject, &c.].

ii. That the *order* of business (unless previously settled) is properly arranged.

iii. That the *persons* who are to take part in the proceedings (1) chairman, (2) secretary—if any, and (3) speakers are (as far as possible) determined on.

iv. That the *manner* in which it is to be conducted; as (1) lecture, address, &c., (2) resolutions, (3) discussion, &c., is agreed on and provided for.

v. That the *form* (unless previously settled otherwise (1) by custom, (2) by constitution, (3) by incorporation, &c.) which the meeting should assume in regard to the moving of resolutions, taking up special points or details, taking votes, &c., is fixed on (in case of unseemly dissensions).

2. The following requisites in the proper conducting of meetings require attention, viz.:—

i. Taking the chair by (1) prior announcement, (2) office, (3) election.

ii. Opening the meeting by (1) statement of its object, (2) chairman's remarks, (3) reading the minutes of previous meeting—if any; or intimation of the meeting, or, (4) prayer, &c.

iii. Proceeding with business as laid down in the *agenda* of meeting or order of the day (which should always be placed officially in the chairman's hands).

iv. Arranging for the carrying out of the purpose of the meeting (if necessary) by (1) empowering or instructing chairman to sign minutes and forward resolutions to any special destination; (2) appointing committee with powers or instructions to carry them out; (3) remitting to the promoters, directors, office-bearers, &c., to consider further, to report or set in motion what has been agreed on; (4) or adjourning or otherwise disposing of any business involved in the resolutions.

v. Closing the meeting by (1) votes of thanks, (2) formal dismission or, (3) pronouncing the benediction, &c. [See *ante* p. 54.]

V.—General Hints on how to conduct Soirées, Penny Readings, Social, Musical Entertainments, &c.

1. Appoint (or form) a committee to whom the organizing of the meeting may be intrusted. The duty of this committee (subject to instructions from general body—if any)—should include arrangements as to (1) time, place and due intimation, so as to secure (if necessary) a fit and favourable hall, an advantageous and proper time, and publicity, as full as may be thought desirable; (2) chairman, speakers, singers, reciters, readers, musical performers or other entertainers; (3) preparation of programme, issue, distribution and sale of tickets; (4) provision of tea, cake, fruit, &c., and determination of the manner, time, amount, &c., of the distribution; (5) the securing of the comfort of those who attend, so that all may be comfortably seated, conveniently served, and properly supplied; (6) the decorating or fitting up of the place for the purpose (if necessary).

At such (and all similar meetings) it is the duty of the *committee* to foresee (as far as possible) and provide everything that may tend to success, and to be vigilant in avoiding any discomfort or inconvenience; of the *chairman* to enter into the spirit of the meeting heartily, to direct the proceedings good-naturedly and to keep everything smooth and pleasant; of the *speakers* to be well-prepared, brief, pointed, and to the purpose; of the *singers*, &c., to do their best, without affectation, jealousy, or requiring undue pressure, and to see that what they do is in harmony with the spirit of the meeting; and of the *company* to take in good part the efforts made for their enjoyment, and to bear with the conductors in any unforeseen difficulty that may arise. The more nearly the conducting of such meetings can be made to approach that of a home party of friends, and the relation of hosts and guests, the more perfect and more enjoyable they are.

In-door amusements, entertainments, *re-unions*, soirées, meetings, club-gatherings, &c., ought always to be under the oversight of diligent and intelligent committees, either elected by and from the members, or so chosen as to secure the sympathy, good feeling, and ready submission to any necessary regulations of those who are expected to attend them. The conditions laid upon membership, or attendance, and the restrictions put upon their frequenters should be as few, as reasonable, and as clearly understood as possible. Loving life, not dull and deadening drill, should be aimed at, and self-government ought to be encouraged and provided for by the committee as well as enjoyed and exercised by the members.

Out-door amusements, pic-nics, excursions, public garden parties, field-meetings for social, scientific, or recreative purposes, and all similar gatherings, require on the part of the managing committee not only careful provision for comfort, convenience, and health, but also thoughtful provision as to what may be done in the event of unfavourable weather or any untoward occurrence. Handiness, heartiness, and headiness are all necessary in the managers of such parties, and some of them ought to be known for having good-humoured tact, and a knack of extemporizing employment or amusement, creating interest, securing comfort, keeping up liveliness in case of disappointment, and turning even inconvenience and mishap into matter of joyful memory in the aftertime

INDEX.

	PAGE
Adjournment	43
Amendment	41
Applause	60
Approbation, Signs of	57, 60
Assembly, Rights of	15
Audience	27
Audiences, Duties of	55
Audiences, Rights of	54
"Ayes"	53
Business, Laws of	51
Business, Order of	51, 54
Chairman, Duties of	33
Chairman, Election of	32
Chairman, Nomination of	32
Chairman, Rights of	34
Chair, Possession of the	49
Cheers	60
Complimentary Votes	54, 91
Constituents of Meetings	26
Countermotions	40
Cries	60
Disapprobation	57, 61
Discussion	11
Disturbing a Meeting	63
Duties of Audiences	54
Duties of Chairman	35
Duties of Promoters	22, 31
Duties of Speakers	47
Election of Chairman	32
Eloquence	2, 64, 69
"Finding" of a Meeting	46
Government	28
Grammar	66
Hearers	54
Hissings, &c.	62
House, Possession of the	90
Hustings Meetings	88
Hustings, Oratory of	80
Interruptions	49
Intimations	24, 30
Judgment, Right of Private	10, 42
Kinds of Meetings	94
Laws of Business	51
Leaving the Chair	37, 47
Lectures	85, 89
Logic	66
Manœuvring	63
Meetings, Advantage of	17
Meetings, Constitution of	62
Meetings, Convening of	29
Meetings, Intimation of	24, 30
Meetings, Public, Defined	22
Meetings, Rights of	15
Meetings, Utility of	16, 17
Motions	40
"Noes"	53
Nomination of Chairman	32
Opening a Meeting	52
Opinion, Formation of	1
Opinion, Growth of	21
Opinion, Nature of Public	13, 18
Opinion, Publication of	1
Oratory	78
Order	17
Order of Business	51, 54, 95
Order, Call to	49
Order, Point of	38, 49
Order, Rise to	49
Outline of Public Business	95
Passions	68
Penny Readings, How to Manage	95
Persuasion	67
Philosophy	66
Platform, Eloquence of	71
Platformists	27
Poetry	65
Politics	66
Possession of the Chair	46, 49, 90
Postponement	43
Power of Public Opinion	14
Press	9
Previous Question	45
Promoters, Duties of	22
Promoters, Rights of	31
Public Meetings, Kinds of	94
Public Opinion	18
Publicity	11
Question, Putting the	40
Question, The Previous	45
Requisitionists	30
Right of Approval or Disapproval	53
Right of Private Judgment	10, 42
Right of Speech	48
Rights of Audience	55
Rights of Chairman	33 35
Rights of Promoters	22, 31
Rights of Speakers	47, 48
Rights of Voters	53
Rise to Order	49
Ruffing	59
Rules	28, 92
Self-Government	11
Society	28
Soirées, How to conduct	95
Speakers, Duties of	47
Speakers, Rights of	48
Speaking, Husting	80
Speaking, Lecture-room	85
Speaking, Platform	71
Speaking, Public	67
Speaking, Vestry	83
State	29
Successes in Oratory	79-81
Sympathies	68
Vestry, Eloquence of	71
Vestry Meetings	88
Vote, Casting	36
Vote, Taking of the	53
Voters, Rights of	53

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